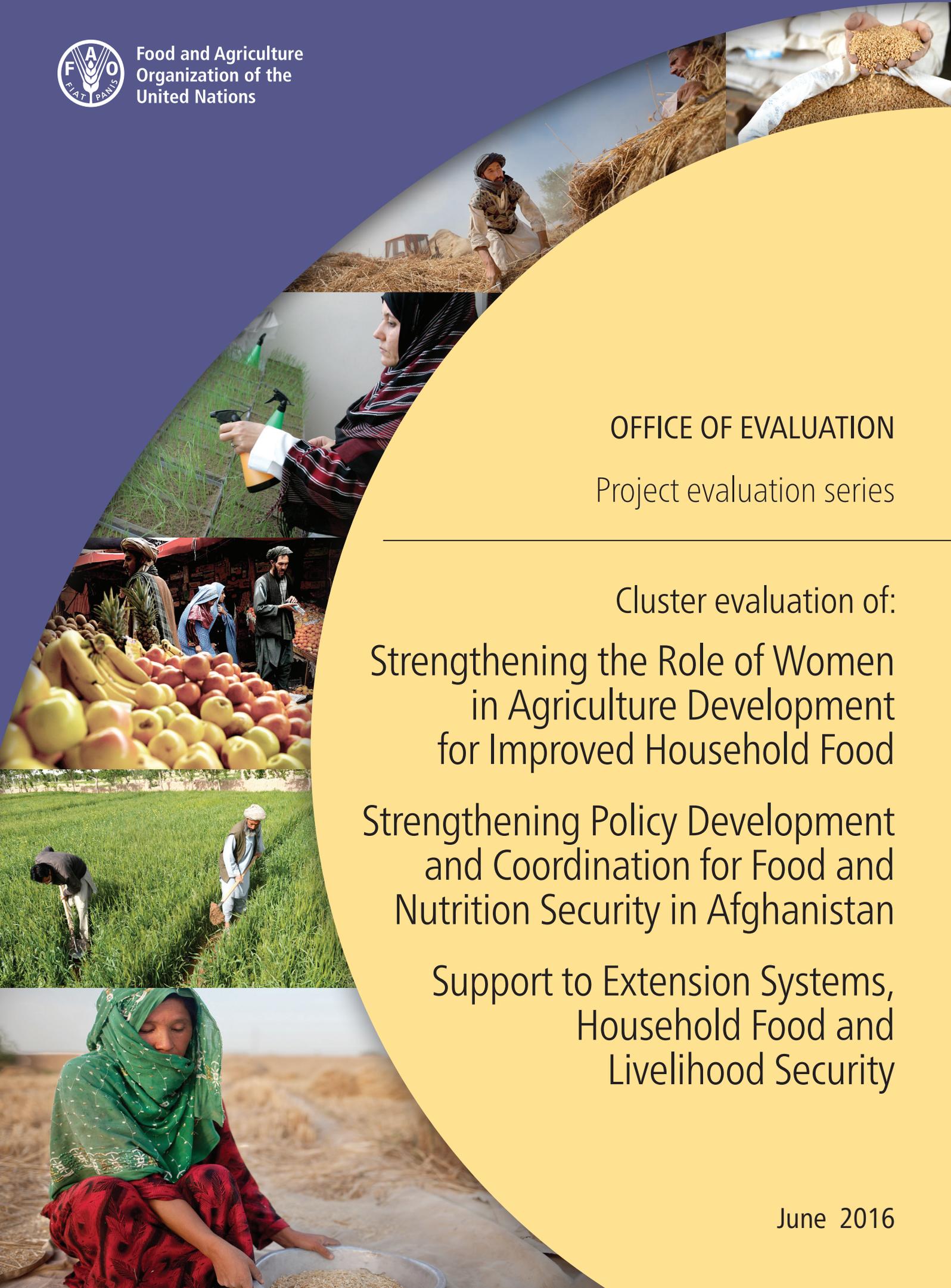




Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



OFFICE OF EVALUATION

Project evaluation series

Cluster evaluation of:

Strengthening the Role of Women
in Agriculture Development
for Improved Household Food

Strengthening Policy Development
and Coordination for Food and
Nutrition Security in Afghanistan

Support to Extension Systems,
Household Food and
Livelihood Security

June 2016

PROJECT EVALUATION SERIES

Cluster evaluation of:

**Strengthening the Role of Women
in Agriculture Development for Improved
Household Food**

**Strengthening Policy Development
and Coordination for Food and Nutrition
Security in Afghanistan**

**Support to Extension Systems,
Household Food and Livelihood Security**

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF EVALUATION**

June 2016

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Office of Evaluation (OED)

This report is available in electronic format at: <http://www.fao.org/evaluation>

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned. The views expressed in this information product are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of FAO.

© FAO 2016, last updated on 17/09/2021

FAO encourages the use, reproduction and dissemination of material in this information product. Except where otherwise indicated, material may be copied, downloaded and printed for private study, research and teaching purposes, or for use in non-commercial products or services, provided that appropriate acknowledgement of FAO as the source and copyright holder is given and that FAO's endorsement of users' views, products or services is not implied in any way.

All requests for translation and adaptation rights, and for resale and other commercial use rights should be made via www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request or addressed to copyright@fao.org.

For further information on this report, please contact:

Director, Office of Evaluation (OED)
Food and Agriculture Organization
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 1, 00153 Rome
Italy
Email: evaluation@fao.org

[GCP/AFG/069/GER](#)
[GCP/AFG/075/GER](#)
[GCP/AFG/072/LUX](#)

Photo credits: cover (top to bottom) ©FAO/Shah Marai / FAO; ©FAO/Danfong Dennis / FAO;
©FAO/Giulio Napolitano / FAO; ©FAO/Shah Marai / FAO; ©FAO/Shah Marai / FAO;
©FAO/Danfong Dennis / FAO

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	v
<i>Acronyms and abbreviations</i>	vi
Executive summary	1
1. Introduction	4
1.1 Background and purpose of the evaluation	4
1.2 Evaluation scope and objectives	4
1.3 Evaluation questions.....	5
1.4 Cluster evaluation.....	5
1.5 Methodology of the evaluation	5
1.5.1 Data collection method	6
1.5.2 Document review	6
1.5.3 Stakeholders engagement.....	6
1.5.4 Debriefing.....	6
1.6 Instrument for data collection	7
1.7 Performance standards.....	7
1.8 Data analysis	7
1.9 Major limitations.....	7
2. Context of food security in Afghanistan	9
2.1 Linkage with national and regional strategies.....	9
2.2 Change in implementation	10
2.3 Key partners	10
2.4 Scale of interventions	11
2.5 Institutional set-up	11
2.6 Resources	11
3. Evaluation findings	12
3.1 Synthesis and analysis (using the most significant change).....	16
3.2 Additional contributions	19
4. Assessment of thematic cluster implementation	21
4.1 Adequacy of FAO’s implementation approach to generate results.....	21
4.2 Beneficiary identification	21
4.3 Appropriateness of the institutional set-up and management arrangement.....	21
4.4 Performance of the operational management function of the monitoring system	22
4.5 Appropriateness of the technical support provided by FAO headquarters, regional and country offices.....	22

4.6 Synergetic effects developed in partnership for programme delivery.....	22
4.7 Government commitment	22
5. Assessment of cross-cutting issues and sustainability.....	23
5.1 Gender	23
5.2 Capacity development.....	23
5.3 Partnership and alliances	24
5.4 Sustainability and ownership of results	24
6. Conclusions.....	26
7. Recommendations.....	28
8 Lessons learned	29
Appendices.....	30
Appendix 1: Output level assessment	30
Appendix 2: Brief profile of evaluation team members	42
Appendix 3: Documents reviewed	43
Appendix 4: Evaluation tools	45
Appendix 5: Comprehensive analysis of three projects of FAO (069/GER, 072/ LUX and 075/GER)	48

Acknowledgements

The evaluation report of the Afghanistan Cluster Evaluation (069/GER, 075/GER and 072/LUX) was prepared in June 2016 by a team led by Gana Pati Ojha. The report integrates findings of assessment of a food security thematic cluster of:

- Strengthening the Role of Women in Agriculture Development for Improved Household Food
- Strengthening Policy Development and Coordination for Food and Nutrition Security in Afghanistan
- Support to Extension Systems, Household Food and Livelihood Security

The FAO Office of Evaluation is grateful to all beneficiaries, stakeholders and FAO staff who generously gave their time and efforts to provide us support with materials, documents, and information that served as a foundation for the report. Many people participated in the evaluation providing inputs, opinions and responding to evaluation questions.

Special gratitude goes to the thematic cluster management; Ms Mahbooba Abawi, Mr Mofizur Rahman and Mr. Khalil Rahman for extending a full support, sharing with insights and vision on future of the thematic cluster, guidance and advice. We also thank Mr Moeen-uddin Siraj for his exceptional support, and the FAO team. Finally, we especially thank all the individuals who contributed their insights through interviews and focus group discussions. Without their insights, this report would not be possible.

Evaluation team

Gana Pati Ojha, Team Leader

Khal Ahmadzai, National Consultant

Omar Awabdeh, FAO Office of Evaluation, Evaluation Manager

Acronyms and abbreviations

AGND	Food Safety and Quality Unit
AGNP	Nutrition Programmes Service (FAO)
AMP	Agriculture Master Plan
CBO	Community-Based Organizations
CDC	Community Development Committee
CIG	Common Interest Groups
DAIL	Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
DDNR	Research and Extension Unit
DRRD	Department of Rehabilitation and Rural Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of United Nations
FNS	Food and Nutrition Security
HED	Home Economics Department
LTO	Lead Technical Officer
LTU	Lead Technical Unit
LUX	Luxemburg
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MRRD	Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development
NADF	National Agricultural Development Framework
NGO	Non-government Organization
OED	Office of Evaluation (FAO)
PPD	Directorate of Policy and Planning
RAP	Regional Office for Asia and Pacific
TOC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Organisation of the United Nations
WTTTC	Women Technology Transfer and Training Centre

Executive summary

- ES1 The Afghanistan Food Security Cluster Evaluation (069/GER, 075/GER and 072/LUX) fulfils the main purpose of assessing the overall contribution of the thematic cluster to enhanced, coordinated and informed food security policies, and to support extension services and women's empowerment in agriculture development at the national and sub-national levels. The primary audience of the evaluation to which the findings and recommendations are offered includes FAO Afghanistan, the relevant Lead Technical Unit (LTU), donors and the Steering Committee. It is intended that they will use the findings and recommendations of the evaluation for maximizing the strategic relevance of FAO's work in Afghanistan on food security, policy support, institutional strengthening, gender mainstreaming and capacity development.
- ES2 The Afghanistan Food Security Cluster comprise three interlinked projects related directly to food security and nutrition: (i) Strengthening the Role of Women in Agriculture Development for Improved Household Food, GCP/AFG/069/GER; (ii) Strengthening Policy Development and Coordination for Food and Nutrition Security in Afghanistan, GCP/AFG/075/GER; and (iii) Support to Extension Systems, Household Food and Livelihood Security, GCP/AFG/072/LUX. The first and second project were funded by the Government of Germany with a duration of 45 months. The third project was funded by the Government of Luxemburg with a duration of 36 months. The total funding of the Thematic Cluster is USD 6.927 million out of which, the funding amount for each of the three projects ranged from about USD 2.16 million to USD 2.40 million.
- ES3 While each of the projects focused on food security and nutrition, the first one (069/GER) focused on the food and nutrition security (FNS) of women from a gender perspective. The second project (075/GER), concerns creating an enabling environment for food security and nutrition through the development of policies and strategies. The third project (072/LUX) is to implement a model (demand-driven) extension system in two districts, where the results and lessons learned are expected to guide the government policy, strategy and programmes in the development of an effective extension delivery system for the whole country.
- ES4 The evaluation assessed the three projects as a thematic cluster, focusing on outcome level results and the most strategic outputs. It analysed the work and assessed the overall contribution by the programme in Afghanistan by emphasizing the intended and unintended results. The evaluation was carried out between September and December 2015, with field mission to Afghanistan from the end of September to the middle of October 2015. The evaluation had contacted stakeholders, including target groups, at central level (ministries and directorates), provincial level (two provinces) and district level (three districts). In addition to contacting project staff, and staff of the FAO Representation in Afghanistan, the mission contacted one of the LTOs based in Bangkok.

Key findings on evaluation question 1: How did the thematic cluster contribute to enhanced agriculture services for women, improve household food security and nutrition, and increase women's access to markets, extension services, information and resources?

There has been increased knowledge and skill development for women in mushroom farming and technology transfer of mushroom cultivation. These skills were also transferred from the women trainees to community farmers. This means that women are acting as informal extension workers in the community, which was a role previously filled only by men.

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) was supported in building up sustainable project management with regard to women, agriculture and household food security, including planning, implementation, supervision and monitoring structures at the national and provincial levels, which enabled effective implementation and regular project adjustments.
- Although women's movements are restricted within the community, they travelled to the Women Technology Transfer and Training Centres (WTTTCs) to ask for technology and sell their products to the community market, thus earning income.

- When women began earning income, it was generally used for household necessities such as food, clothing (for them and the children) and school supplies for the children.
- Although women had increased access to extension services, their access to markets to sell their products was not significantly increased. In addition, the female producers were not well informed about how to package their products.

Key findings on evaluation question 2: To what extent did the thematic cluster contribute to enhanced capacities, institutional structures and processes (e.g. the enabling environment at the institutional and individual levels) for improved policy development, as well as programme design, implementation and procedures?

- The training provided has contributed to enhancing the analytical skills of MAIL staff, as well as relevant stakeholders, in food security and nutrition analysis, programming, monitoring and policy formulation. The participants developed individual capacities to prepare a logframe of the project and make meaningful comments on the FSN strategy.
- The capacities of national, district and provincial staff to collect and use data in preparing programmes for agriculture development have increased.
- The capacities of female trainers (especially the group leader) to provide technical training to members of the groups were increased to some extent. However, the capacities were not developed to the required level, as many trainings were provided by FAO staff rather than the group leaders.

Key findings on evaluation question 3: To what extent did the thematic cluster contribute to enhanced partnerships and collaboration and coordination mechanisms among central government institutions, decentralized offices and community-based organizations to improve livelihoods

To some extent the FSN thematic cluster has contributed to enhancing coordination, both vertically and horizontally. There has been better Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) (centre-province/district) coordination than before, and this was achieved mainly with the support of two projects (069/GER and 072/LUX). DAIL and the Department of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (DRRD) were found to be working together in the provinces and districts. The involvement of the Community Development Committee (CDC) in beneficiary identification, as well as its continuous technical support for DAIL in cluster-supported districts, are examples of strengthened horizontal collaboration. However, the level of coordination was still in the early stages, and was not strengthened in a way that will continue after the projects.

Finding of sub-question 4.1: What was the thematic cluster's contribution to organizational output 10201: improving capacities of governments and stakeholders for strategic coordination across sectors and stakeholders for food security and nutrition?

The technical and managerial capacities of MAIL staff were improved, including those involved in planning, extension services and home economics. The capacities of other ministries were also improved, including the Ministry of Health. As a result, collaboration and coordination among government institutions and other stakeholders were enhanced and strengthened in support of food security and nutrition.

Finding of sub-question 4.2: What was the thematic cluster's contribution to organizational output 10101: improving capacities of governments and stakeholders for developing sectoral and cross sectoral policy frameworks, investment plans and programmes for food security and nutrition?

The capacity of the government, especially MAIL and MOPH, for developing food security and nutrition policy frameworks was strengthened. As a result, the Afghanistan Food and Nutrition Security Agenda (AFSANA), which is a key policy and strategic framework for food and nutrition security, was agreed and endorsed by the office of the second Vice President. A food and nutrition security planning and implementation manual was prepared and submitted for endorsement by MAIL.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: The food security cluster has contributed to women empowerment through the formation of common interest groups for women resulted in their social and economic empowerment by creating institutions and strengthening the bargaining power through economies of scale not only to access markets but also to demand enhanced agricultural services to women, thus improving household food security and nutrition.

Conclusion 2: The thematic cluster was found to be contributing to the enhancement of capacities, institutional structures and processes for improved policy development, programme design and implementation procedures. The capacity of taskforce group members was enhanced in terms of (i) making quality comments on FSN Strategy and Planning and Implementation Manual, and holding discussions more focused on specific problems; and (ii) preparing logframes for FSN. The capacity of the M&E system was improved for collecting FSN data, managing the database, as guided by the result frame, and analysing policy gaps at the ministry.

Conclusion 3: There was some institutional improvement through increased coordination among stakeholders at the district level. Extension workers are now better equipped and have better knowledge and skills with which to address the FSN issues of farmers through supervision and guidance to CIGs. A district development plan was developed, bringing related stakeholders together based on the baseline information in the project districts. The plan is more realistic than before, as it was planned based on recent statistics and with participatory demand driven planning implementation and monitoring.

Conclusion 4.1: The FSN thematic cluster has to some extent contributed to enhanced coordination, both vertically and horizontally. There was better centre-province/district coordination than before. DAIL and DRRD were found to be working together in the district as service providers. The strengthened coordination contributed to plan, initiate and implement some joint activities for the improved household food security and nutrition.

Conclusion 4.2: The capacities of governments and stakeholders for developing sectoral and cross sectoral policy frameworks, investment plans and programmes for food security and nutrition was improved to some extent due to the thematic cluster's contribution. The cluster has carried out a number of capacity development efforts – such as FSN policy development, issues and concepts; M&E; and FSN analysis – which enhanced the knowledge and skills of MAIL and FSN stakeholders, enabling them to contribute to the FSN policy development process. As a result, without the full-time engagement of an international expert they were able to facilitate the policy process for relevant policy and strategy development work; and carry out their respective work in relation to analysing, planning and designing various FSN programmes.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: *to FAO Expand and strengthen the capacity development activities of duty bearers, strengthen cooperation and coordination among MAIL/DAIL/HED, and invest more in developing M&E systems and capacities.*

The low technical capacities of MAIL, DAIL and HED staff were found to result from the projects' direct implementation modality. FAO should explore innovative ways to improve MAIL's technical and managerial capacities, even in the post-conflict context.

Recommendation 2: *to FAO Support the expansion of local production of mycelium and spawn for the continuation and scaling up of mushroom production, and strengthen linkages with private sector.*

Recommendation 3: *to FAO Provide programmatic support to the implementation of the FSN strategy.*

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and purpose of the evaluation

- 1 In partnership with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has promoted agricultural development through the implementation of several projects. The main government partner was the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), and the project activities involved demand-driven extension services, effective and efficient institutional structures and processes, and women's empowerment. FAO support was provided mainly through projects linked to the implementation of the Agriculture Master Plan, the National Agricultural Development Framework (NADF) and the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Strategy.
- 2 In recent years, FAO implemented three interlinked projects related directly to food security and nutrition: (i) Strengthening the Role of Women in Agriculture Development for Improved Household Food, GCP/AFG/069/GER; (ii) Strengthening Policy Development and Coordination for Food and Nutrition Security in Afghanistan, GCP/AFG/075/GER; and (iii) Support to Extension Systems, Household Food and Livelihood Security, GCP/AFG/072/LUX. The first and second project were funded by the Government of Germany with a duration of 45 months. The third project was funded by the Government of Luxemburg with a duration of 36 months. The funding amount for each of the three projects ranged from about USD 2.16 million to USD 2.40 million. While each of the projects focused on food security and nutrition, the first one focused on the food and nutrition security (FNS) of women from a gender perspective. This was implemented from January 2012 to September 2015. The second project, which started in January 2013 and is scheduled to end in September 2016, concerns creating an enabling environment for food security and nutrition through the development of policies and strategies. The third project is to implement a model (demand-driven) extension system in two districts, where the results and lessons learned are expected to guide the government policy, strategy and programmes in the development of an effective extension delivery system for the whole country. This project started in August 2013 and is expected to be completed in July 2016.
- 3 As the first project (GCP/AFG/069/GER) was already completed, it was selected for the final evaluation. The lessons drawn from this project are expected to inform the two continuing projects, as well as others in the future. The two other projects were assessed from the perspective of a mid-term review. The lessons drawn from these projects will be used to take corrective measures for the remaining portion of the projects. Although the evaluation involved three separate projects, they are considered together as one unit or thematic cluster, as they address the common problems of food security and nutrition, though at different levels and target groups.
- 4 The main purpose of the evaluation was to assess the overall contribution of the thematic cluster to enhanced, coordinated and informed food security policies, and to support extension services and women's empowerment in agriculture development at the national and sub-national levels.
- 5 The primary audience of the evaluation to which the findings and recommendations are offered includes FAO Afghanistan, the relevant Lead Technical Unit (LTU), donors and the Steering Committee. It is intended that they will use the findings and recommendations of the evaluation for maximizing the strategic relevance of FAO's work in Afghanistan on food security, policy support, institutional strengthening, gender and capacity development.

1.2 Evaluation scope and objectives

- 6 The evaluation assessed the three projects as a thematic cluster, focusing on outcome level results and the most strategic outputs. It analysed the work and assessed the overall contribution by the programme in Afghanistan by emphasizing the intended and unintended results. The evaluation was carried out between September and December

2015, with field mission to Afghanistan from the end of September to the middle of October 2015. The evaluation had contacted stakeholders, including target groups, at central level (ministries and directorates), provincial level (two provinces) and district level (three districts). In addition to contacting project staff, and staff of the FAO Representation in Afghanistan, the mission contacted one of the LTOs based in Bangkok.

- 7 FAO Afghanistan, under its Country Programme Framework (CPF), has identified support to FSN as one of its priority areas. The three intertwined projects mentioned above are linked to this priority area. The projects contributed to two of FAO's organizational outputs:
 - Organizational Output 10201: Improving capacities of governments and stakeholders for strategic coordination across sectors and stakeholders for food security and nutrition. Two projects (069/GER and 072/LUX) were completely designed to contribute to this output, and one project (075/GER) partly so.
 - The project 075/GER was also designed to contribute partly to Organizational Output 10101, which concerns improving the capacities of governments and stakeholders for developing sectoral and cross-sectoral policy frameworks, investment plans and programmes for food security and nutrition.
- 8 Under this context, the evaluation has assessed the overall:
 - effectiveness of the capacity development work on country capacities, governance and policies within FSN;
 - effectiveness of gender responsiveness and empowerment, and the quality of the advisory services and coordination mechanisms;
 - contribution of the thematic cluster to the CPF and the FAO Organizational Outputs;
 - efficiency and effectiveness of partnership strategies.

1.3 Evaluation questions

- 9 The evaluation used the following four evaluation questions, which were developed to assess the situation of the Food Security and Nutrition Cluster while taking into consideration the expected outcomes of individual projects:
 - i. How did the thematic cluster contribute to enhanced agriculture services for women, improve household food security and nutrition, and increase women's access to markets, extension services, information and resources?
 - ii. To what extent did the thematic cluster contribute to enhanced capacities, institutional structures and processes (e.g. the enabling environment at the institutional and individual levels) for improved policy development, as well as programme design, implementation and procedures?
 - iii. To what extent did the thematic cluster contribute to enhanced partnerships and collaboration and coordination mechanisms among central government institutions, decentralized offices and community-based organizations (CBOs) to improve livelihoods?
 - iv. What are the thematic cluster's contributions to the two Organizational Outputs?

1.4 Cluster evaluation

- 10 Unlike other evaluations that evaluate a single project or programme, this evaluation assessed three projects dealing with food security and nutrition as a cluster. It primarily assessed the intended six outcomes of the three projects, as well as nine strategic outputs that contributed to the six outcomes. These are shown below in the schematic diagram of the theory of change (TOC).

1.5 Methodology of the evaluation

- 11 The methodology of this cluster evaluation is described below in terms of evaluation approach, data collection method, debriefing, key respondents, instruments for data collection, performance standards and stakeholder engagement.

- 12 The overall approach of the evaluation was theory-based. The evaluation developed a detailed TOC, taking into consideration all three projects as a unit. The TOC of each project was developed by considering the relationship between inputs, activities, outputs, outcome and impact. For this cluster evaluation, however, the TOC was developed by considering the most strategic outputs, all outcomes, and FAO's organizational outputs and impact. These elements were guided by project terms of reference (ToRs) (see Annex 1), discussions with the Evaluation Officer from FAO's Office of Evaluation (OED), and input from the evaluation team and end users of the evaluation, such as FAO Afghanistan. The schematic diagram of the TOC is provided below. In addition, the evaluation took the most significant change approach to assess the contribution of the thematic cluster. The evaluation tools are presented in Annex 5.

1.5.1 Data collection method

- 13 In order to answer the evaluation questions, the necessary data from primary and secondary sources were collected. The data were collected through document review, interaction with stakeholders through meetings, consultations, focus group discussions, and on-site observation. A brief outline of the data collection methods is presented below.

1.5.2 Document review

- 14 The collection and review of documents and data continued throughout the evaluation-period. The methods for the review included analyses of various sources of information, including an in-depth desk review of the relevant documents (e.g. project progress reports, project document, annual work plans, monitoring and evaluation plan, procurement plan, and six-monthly progress reports). A list of documents reviewed is provided in the appendix.

1.5.3 Stakeholders engagement

- 15 During field visit, interactions were done with various stakeholders including but not limited to the FAO Representative in Afghanistan, project staff, project counterparts, MAIL Directors (Home economics, Extension, Planning and Programme Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), Planning Adviser, Cooperatives), Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL), M&E Director, Statistics Directors and MIS Advisers. Meetings were also held with project beneficiaries in Kabul and Balkh, including visits to the demonstration plot, food processing centre and mushroom plant. In addition, discussions were held with representatives of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP). The list of the persons met is provided in Annex 4.
- 16 Stakeholders' participation was well maintained at various levels, including target groups (farmers), provincial authority (DAIL, FAO) and central level (MAIL, FAO). The inception report and questionnaire were developed while consulting FAO and project managers. They were further refined while consulting project counterparts at MAIL and DAIL. The project staff and FAO Afghanistan staff were given an opportunity to comment on the findings and identify the most significant changes among the changes. Likewise, the focus groups were given an opportunity to select the most important changes. They were considered as the experts in rating the changes.

1.5.4 Debriefing

- 17 Two debriefings took place, one with the FAOR in Balkh province and another with the FAOR and project staff. The debriefings served to verify the findings, and the participants' selected changes among the changes. The original debriefing planned with the Deputy Minister could not be held due to the worsened security situation and tight schedule of the Minister.

1.6 Instrument for data collection

- 18 The main instruments for data gathering and information collection were sets of questionnaires customized by stakeholder type. A total of six questionnaires were developed, with one each for FAO staff, MAIL, MOWA, Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (MRRD), MOPH, DAIL for provinces and districts, non-governmental organizations (NGOs)/CBOs, and individual farmers. Likewise, a separate checklist was prepared for focus group discussion. The questionnaires and checklist were developed taking into account the evaluation objectives and main questions provided in the ToRs. The questionnaires and checklist were found appropriate for capturing the required information. Some questionnaires required respondents to self-report, while others were administered by evaluators. The questionnaires were a mix of semi-structured and open ended questions (See Annex 5).

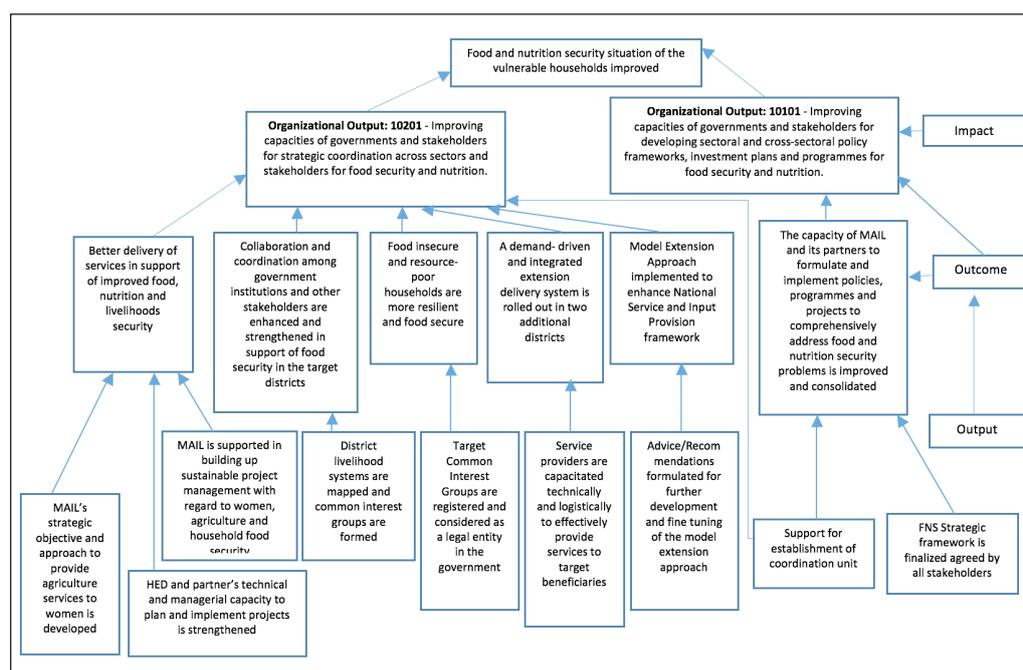


Figure 1. Theory of Change of the food security cluster

1.7 Performance standards

- 19 The standards used to assess performance included outcome level indicators for all three projects, and some indicators of strategic outputs. Focus was placed on assessing the contribution of each project to changes (i) at the beneficiary level; (ii) on project staff; and (iii) on MAIL/DAIL and at the policy level.

1.8 Data analysis

Responses from different sources were triangulated to increase the reliability and validity of information. Similar information from different sources was considered as valid and reliable information.

1.9 Major limitations

- 20 Though the evaluation tried to make field visits to four provinces (two provinces each for GCP/AFG/069/GER and GCP/AFG/072/LUX), it was only able to do so in two provinces (one province each for the two projects given above) due to the worsening security situation. The evaluation team could not get security clearance from the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) to visit Badakshan Province, where the main activities took

place for project GCP/AFG/069/GER. Similarly, a visit could not be made to Bamyan Province, where the project "GCP/AFG/072/LUX" had important activities. The limited number of the visits to provinces affected the number of focus group discussions planned. However, an adequate amount of information was collected from the visited sites to represent the field situation of the two projects which had field programmes. Visits to Kabul Province, District 7 and District 10 helped the evaluation understand the implementation modality and to meet with the stakeholders of the project GCP/AFG/072/LUX. Likewise, the evaluation team learned about the field situation of the project GCP/AFG/072/LUX while visiting Balkh Province and Dehdadi District. The second approach taken to compensate for the small number of visits was reading the field mission reports made by the respective Monitoring Units.

2. Context of food security in Afghanistan

- 21 Rural agriculture remains the backbone of Afghanistan's economy, as 76 percent of Afghans live in rural areas and 78 percent of the working population is engaged in agriculture. Moreover, agriculture contributes about 31 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Although a large segment of the population is engaged in agriculture, the country is classified as food insecure, not only from the perspective of food availability but also the right to food (the right to "physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe, nutritious and culturally accepted food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (World Food Summit 1996). This right is limited by the prevailing conditions of poverty, lack of economic opportunities, inadequate support to communities and insufficient "safety nets".
- 22 A significant portion (36 percent) of Afghanistan's population lives below the national poverty line and is unable to meet their basic needs and dietary requirements. Food insecurity is found also in urban areas, accompanied by malnutrition. The food price crisis affected the country more than many other countries due to its high level of poverty. A second group of Afghans, corresponding to 37 percent of the population, are slightly better off, but still living on the borderline of absolute poverty and food insecurity. Their conditions are influenced by the fluctuation of economic factors (e.g. food prices, income and employment opportunities).
- 23 Women, in particular, rather than female-headed households, are found to have disproportionately inferior access to adequate food, even if the households to which they belong are not considered vulnerable: 21 percent of the women of reproductive age are malnourished, 60.5 percent of children under the age of five are stunted (one of the highest levels in the world) and 33.7 percent are underweight.
- 24 The major staple crop of Afghanistan is wheat, which is largely dependent on weather. Therefore, production has varied significantly from year to year. Although Afghanistan is famous for the production of grapes, nuts and temperate fruits, access to markets and fair prices are a significant challenge. Successes and improvements in production and productivity are often offset by increasing instability, conflicts, and violent acts. Limited access to markets, basic goods, health services and water and sanitation, particularly in remote areas, increases vulnerability and contributes to a rise in malnutrition. Other limitations to access to basic services include geographical differences, natural resource deficits and natural disasters.
- 25 Despite these challenges, agriculture still plays a key role in the livelihoods of the country, where farming and pastoral activities are often the only feasible alternative to unemployment. It is the main source of income of close to one-third of households, and 40 percent of the labour force is employed in the sector. In order to improve the food security and nutrition condition of Afghan men, women, girls, boys and infants, it is imperative to increase agricultural production and productivity by improving different livelihood assets, such as human resources (both men and women), natural capital, physical assets, financial resources, social capital and political assets.
- 26 Efforts are being made to improve food security and nutrition in Afghanistan. Many of these efforts are carried out with the support of FAO through different projects. FAO, in collaboration with the government and the MAIL in particular, implemented a series of projects in this field preceding the current projects. The uniqueness of the above mentioned three projects is that they were specifically targeted to address food security and nutrition issues.

2.1 Linkage with national and regional strategies

- 27 The NADF, which was prepared in line of the Agricultural and Rural Development Sector Strategy under the Social and Development pillar of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), is the guiding document of MAIL. The three projects discussed in this

report were found to be closely linked to the organizational results (creating an enabling environment and political commitment for the enhancement of technical and managerial capacities, including coordination of the stakeholders at national and subnational level on food security and nutrition); regional priority areas (fostering agriculture production and rural development for food and nutrition security); country programming framework outcomes (support for agricultural productive capacity and support for food and nutrition capacities); and UNDAF outcomes: (i) increased agricultural output and access to diversified food at the household level; (ii) economic growth is accelerated to reduce vulnerability and poverty, strengthen the resilience of the licit economy and reduce the illicit economy in its multiple dimensions; and (iii) increased support for sustainable livelihoods and agricultural development, aiming toward food security and income-creating opportunities).

2.2 Change in implementation

- 28 Project GCP/AFG/069/GER started on 1 January 2012 and ended on 30 Sept 2015. The project GCP/AFG/072/LUX started on 1 April 2013 and completed on 31 July 2016. In the case of project GCP/AFG/075/GER, the original schedule was 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2015. The project, however, started one year after the planned date and is expected to finish on 30 September 2016, as per the revised NTE. The main reason for late implementation was a delay in recruiting the CTA by FAO¹. Later, the donor, FAO and MAIL agreed to a no-cost extension of the project for nine months, until 30 September 2016.
- 29 The GCP/AFG/075/GER project made a shift from Food for Life to FSN. In the original document, support was to be provided for the establishment of a Food for Life NPP planning and coordination unit. The project has since been changed to support the establishment of an FSN coordination unit in MAIL, due to MAIL's preference for the project to focus on FSN aspects rather than establishing a Food for Life unit. In order to accommodate this change, the project logframe was revised. As per the change, the project will provide support to operationalize the FSN unit only at MAIL level, provided that AFSANA – the key FSN strategy document at national level – is operational. AFSANA is expected to cover the provincial level FSN structure by involving inter-ministerial stakeholders, where MAIL will also be proactively engaged.

2.3 Key partners

- 30 The main implementing partners include MAIL and specific directorates (DAILs) of MAIL at the central level for all three projects. For two of the projects (GCP/AFG/069/GER and GCP/AFG/072/LUX), the provincial and district departments (DAIL) of MAIL where projects had been implemented also took part in the implementation. The FAOR was the budget holder for all three projects.
- 31 FAO was involved in the recruitment, international travel, salaries and payments of the international personnel; procurement; arrangements for periodic technical supervisory support or review missions; and the decisions of Steering Committee regarding constitutional, financial and budgetary provisions. The government took the necessary measures to facilitate the execution of the projects; dealt with any claims brought by third parties against FAO; undertook recruitment, salaries and social security measures of its own national staff assigned to the project; granted the staff of FAO and of the donor government, as well as persons acting on their behalf, access to the project sites, materials and documentation relating to the projects; took responsibility for the cost of import and customs clearance of the projects' equipment, as well as transportation, handling, storage, related expenses within the country, insurance, safe custody and maintenance.

1 It was known during the evaluation mission that the Lead Technical Unit (LTU) based in Rome, carried out a project inception mission in Afghanistan, and decided in consultation with the official of MAIL and FAO, to put on hold the implementation of the planned activities until the CTA and the project staff are fully on board, which delayed to start the actual implementation. All the project staff and the CTA is on board since 1 January, 2014. This delay has been communicated and accepted by the donor through Budget Revision A (BR A), and the project received no cost extension for 9 months (until Sept, 2016) from the donor to cover the activities initially planned in the year of 2013.

2.4 Scale of interventions

- 32 Though the aim of the three projects was to improve the food security and nutrition of vulnerable people, the focus of each project's intervention differed significantly. The project GCP/AFG/075/GER focused largely on the formulation of policies, strategies and guidelines for implementation of FSN strategies. Its target group, therefore, was limited to central level, although some provincial level government authorities, mainly DAIL, were also involved to some extent in the formulation of the documents and taking part in capacity development interventions. As a policy project, this is a futuristic project, meaning that its benefits for vulnerable people will take time to materialize. The two other projects targeted vulnerable households in addition to targeting government staff and institutions for capacity development. The target group of the project GCP/AFG/069/GER was 4 500 households of three provinces, nine districts and 90 villages. In addition, the project included 152 staff of MAIL to receive capacity development interventions including short-term and long-term training. The interventions were focused more on the provinces than the centre (28.6 percent). As the project focused on women, at least 50 percent of those who participated in the capacity development intervention were women. The project GCP/AFG/072/LUX is geared toward the development of an integrated demand-driven extension approach with support to province at coordination level and centre at policy recommendation level. Its focus was at the district level, and to a lesser extent the province and centre level. The direct beneficiaries of this project were 5 200 households bound into common interest groups.

2.5 Institutional set-up

- 33 As mentioned previously, all three projects were within the jurisdiction of MAIL. The budget holder of each project was the FAOR. The projects were, however, linked administratively with a specific directorate of MAIL and each had an assigned counterpart. The project GCP/AFG/075/GER was assigned to MAIL's General Directorate of Policy and Planning (PPD), as it is the primary institution responsible for policy, programme and project design, particularly for all on-budget interventions. PPD has a close linkage with MAIL's Deputy Minister for Technical Affairs. It is guided by a steering committee headed by the Deputy Minister, and its members include the Directors General of relevant Directorates of MAIL (e.g. Policy and Planning, Extension, Cooperatives, Livestock, Natural Resources), a focal person from the Gender Unit, and two FAO representatives.
- 34 The direct counterpart of the project GCP/AFG/069/GER was MAIL's General Directorate of Agriculture Extension in general, and the Department of Home Economics in particular. The project GCP/AFG/072/LUX is being implemented by the Extension Directorate of MAIL at the central level, with support from provincial and district DAILs at the local level and technical support from FAO through the Project Management Unit (PMU). The district project implementation and coordination team includes MRRD, the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Energy and Water Resources (MEW) and Ministry of Public Works and Welfare (MPWW), as well as others present in the district.

2.6 Resources

- 35 The actual project team of GCP/AFG/075/GER, approved by the donor through budget revision, is: one CTA (33 p/m), one Senior National M&E Officer (33 p/m), one National admin and Finance Assistance (36 p/m), one National Nutrition Officer (26 p/m), one National Food Security Coordinator (23 p/m), one National FSN Communication Assistant (p/m) and two National Drivers (65 p/m). The project GCP/AFG/072/LUX, however, had a relatively different staff set-up that includes one Project Manager (32 p/m), one Livelihood and Food Security Officer (32 p/m), one Monitoring and Information Management Officer (32 p/m), one Database Officer (9 p/m), one Administration Assistant and two drivers. In addition, it had counterparts at the national (1), provincial (4) and district (4) levels. Further, it has 12 District Project Team Members and three cleaners.
- 36 The budgets of each project were of similar size. The project GCP/AFG/075/GER budget totalled USD 2 398 979. The project GCP/AFG/069/GER totalled USD 2 158 164, and the project GCP/AFG/072/LUX was USD 2 370 350.

3. Evaluation findings²

- 37 The cluster interventions and results generated by them were relevant, as the interventions were designed based on the needs and demands of the beneficiary target groups. The needs were also assessed for capacity development, and related interventions were designed accordingly. The evaluation team asked the beneficiaries the extent to which the interventions and results were relevant to their needs and demands, and found the responses positive. However, some interventions were not based on farmers' demands, as in the beginning they had no or limited awareness of them. Once these interventions were implemented, the beneficiaries found them relevant to their context. Mushroom production, for example, was not a demand of the farmers. It was introduced by the cluster on the basis of global experience. After the implementation, farmers appreciated mushroom production as relevant enterprise considering the small amount of land available to them.

Key findings on evaluation question 1: How did the thematic cluster contribute to enhanced agriculture services for women, improve household food security and nutrition, and increase women's access to markets, extension services, information and resources?

- Women's capacities were developed through the creation of an enabling environment by: developing agriculture policies that consider the specific needs or challenges of women; training women on technical agricultural aspects; leadership development activities; and the formation of women's groups.
- MAIL was supported in building up sustainable project management with regard to women, agriculture and household food security, including planning, implementation, supervision and monitoring structures at the national and provincial levels, which enabled effective implementation and regular project adjustments.
- Although women's movements are restricted within the community, they travelled to the Women Technology Transfer and Training Centres (WTTTCs) to ask for technology and sell their products to the community market, thus earning income.
- When women began earning income, it was generally used for household necessities such as food, clothing (for them and the children) and school supplies for the children.
- Although women had increased access to extension services, their access to markets to sell their products was not significantly increased. In addition, the female producers were not well informed about how to package their products.

- 38 The women in FGD stated that after the training provided they made more frequent visits to WTTTCs and DAIL. At the same time, the extension personnel also had visited them more frequently than before. However, the visits were largely made by project staff and the frequency of visits by government staff did not increase significantly.
- 39 The enhancement of agricultural services to women was accomplished by developing and finalizing the (i) national strategy on women in agriculture; (ii) capacity development framework; (iii) national plan of action for women in agriculture; and (iv) 12 provincial action plans, including preparing a schedule for addressing the needs of women in the concerned communities. In addition, the projects 069/GER and 072/LUX developed income-generating activities for some provinces, including kitchen gardens in Parwan, green houses and mushroom farms in Badakshan, and 105 orchards in Istalif, Kabul. The establishment of an inter-ministerial coordination committee helped to improve coordination among MAIL, the Home Economics Department (HED), DAIL and partners; MRRD and MOWA; and, to some extent, FAO and other UN agencies. However, the coordination between DAIL and the project 069/GER was not to the desired level, as expressed by DAIL in Kabul. This was mainly because the project worked more closely with HED than with DAIL. The result indicators contributed to the attainment of MAIL's strategic objective, and the approach it uses to provide agriculture services to women for improving household food security and nutrition.

² A detailed Output-level assessment of all the projects' outputs is provided in Appendix 1

- 40 Three WTTTCs, which were established and made operational in Hirat, Kabul and Badakshan, can be considered as new institutional initiatives for the capacity development of women. These centres were equipped with materials, furniture, and human resources trained to manage the centres and demonstration plots. The women trained on fruit and vegetable processing, kitchen gardening, green house technology and micro-gardening were found to be using the learned technology on their own. However, the evaluation team noted the weak cooperation from MAIL in Badambagh, Kabul province.
- 41 The technical capacity of MAIL and its directorates with regard to household food security and nutrition was strengthened to some extent through on the job training, exposure visits, field exchanges, and study tour support provided by FAO. The trained staff were distributed appropriately at the centre and provincial level. However, the presence of female extension workers was limited to the provincial level, and the services provided at the district level by the provincial female staff were not found adequate or effective.
- 42 An effective thematic cluster management system was established (including planning documents, work plans, annual work plans, monitoring reports and evaluation results), enabling staff to plan documents and develop their own work plans and annual plan. MAIL provincial staff members reported regularly from selected provinces to the central level, as per standard reporting methods. The reports were submitted on time and at regular intervals, and monitoring visits are undertaken by the concerned directorates of MAIL. At senior management level meetings, results were discussed and plan adjustments were made to food and nutrition security interventions.
- 43 Disaggregated baseline information was consolidated on household nutrition, incomes, post-harvest losses, processing, food insecurity and production systems. The data are gender disaggregated in many respects, except on post-harvest losses, production systems and household nutrition.
- 44 By randomly monitoring 10 percent of the households in each programme village, the evaluation found improved agricultural services to women. This resulted in the production and processing of four to six types of vegetables by 50 percent of the respondents. Consequently, these households increased both their consumption of vegetables and their income (the income increase ranged from Afs 1 000 to 9 000³) from selling a portion of the produce. Some of this income was used to purchase food or pay for their children's medical needs or school expenses. While 50 percent of the respondents earned income from the sale of their products (in addition to household consumption), others used the products only for household consumption (as there was no surplus available to sell).
- 45 The fund raising efforts for sustaining and scaling-up the achieved results have been a challenge for the thematic cluster, and have not yet produced concrete results.
- 46 In summary, the thematic cluster has contributed to the results largely as specified in the project logframe. The project could have contributed more if the level of cooperation and coordination among the related stakeholders was strengthened, if the technical capacity of MAIL and its directorates and departments was further improved, and if additional synergies had been developed among the existing FAO projects.

3 The progress report of the project 069/GER. The FGD participants also gave similar information in District 10 of Kabul province.

Key findings on evaluation question 2: To what extent did the thematic cluster contribute to enhanced capacities, institutional structures and processes (e.g. the enabling environment at the institutional and individual levels) for improved policy development, as well as programme design, implementation and procedures?

- The training provided has contributed to enhancing the analytical skills of MAIL staff, as well as relevant stakeholders, in food security and nutrition analysis, programming, monitoring and policy formulation. The participants developed individual capacities to prepare a logframe of the project and make meaningful comments on the FSN strategy.
- The capacities of national, district and provincial staff to collect and use data in preparing programmes for agriculture development have increased.
- The capacities of female trainers (especially the group leader) to provide technical training to members of the groups were increased to some extent. However, the capacities were not developed to the required level, as many trainings were provided by FAO staff rather than the group leaders.

47 The capacity of MAIL and its partners to formulate and implement policies, programmes and projects that comprehensively address food and nutrition security problems were improved and consolidated, with the following achievements that can be attributed to FAO interventions:

- Endorsement of the Afghanistan Food and Nutrition Security Agenda (AFSANA), a key policy and strategic framework for food and nutrition security, by the office of H.E Second Vice President;
- Finalization and submission to MAIL for official endorsement of the FSN strategy and planning and implementation manual, which clearly spell out the roles of MAIL in food security and nutrition;
- Finalization of 10 FSN specific indicators in consultation with related stakeholders, including their translation into Dari;
- Incorporation of FSN monitoring with MAIL’s monitoring system to track FSN progress;
- Enhancement of institutional and human capacity in MAIL and MRRD offices to provide decentralized extension services;
- Preparation of a draft of the new extension model expected to be used in 2016;
- Use of demand-driven and need-based extension services in two districts;
- Adaption by some projects under MAIL of the thematic cluster-supported extension model.

48 The allocation of resources to FSN interventions, however, has yet to take place, and the MAIL FSN monitoring system was not yet connected with the M&E system of the National Technical Secretariat.

Key findings on evaluation question 3: To what extent did the thematic cluster contribute to enhanced partnerships and collaboration and coordination mechanisms among central government institutions, decentralized offices and community-based organizations to improve livelihoods?

To some extent the FSN thematic cluster has contributed to enhancing coordination, both vertically and horizontally. There has been better MAIL-DAIL (centre-province/district) coordination than before, and this was achieved mainly with the support of two projects (069/GER and 072/LUX). DAIL and the Department of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (DRRD) were found to be working together in the provinces and districts. The involvement of the Community Development Committee (CDC) in beneficiary identification, as well as its continuous technical support for DAIL in cluster-supported districts, are examples of strengthened horizontal collaboration. However, the level of coordination was still in the early stages, and was not strengthened in a way that will continue after the projects.

49 To some extent the FSN thematic cluster contributed to enhanced partnerships and collaboration and coordination mechanisms among central government institutions, decentralized offices and CBOs to improve livelihoods, as per the below evidence:

- Establishment of a coordination framework at central and provincial levels with membership from FAO and related directorates and departments of MAIL and MRRD, including Statistics, Cooperative, M&E, Horticulture, Extension, Plan and Policy, Home Economy. At the district level, District Implementation Teams were set up with the membership from district offices of MAIL, MRRD, CBOs and other stakeholders. These mechanisms were found functional and working toward the implementation of FSN activities, though full-fledged coordination was yet to be seen;
- Establishment of 181 common interest groups (CIGs) of 3 730 beneficiaries, and partnership between these CIGs and the thematic cluster. The resources and technologies are channelled through CIGs, with intensive training and follow up interventions;
- Establishment of linkages between producers and private service providers through CIG's exposure to agriculture fairs, and their linkage with seed entrepreneurs;
- Establishment of inter-ministerial coordination mechanism which helped in strengthening coordination among MAIL, HED, DAIL and partners; MRRD and MOWA; and FAO and other UN agencies. However, institutionalization of the inter-ministerial coordination structure for food and nutrition security interventions is yet to be completed, as (i) the Food Security and Nutrition Steering Committee was not yet formed due to the change in cabinet; and (ii) the relevant officials at MAIL were out of the country for more than four months, which delayed the formalization process of the FSN coordination unit and working group. The group is, however, in the final stages of formation.

Finding of sub-question 4.1: What was the thematic cluster's contribution to organizational output 10201: improving capacities of governments and stakeholders for strategic coordination across sectors and stakeholders for food security and nutrition?

The technical and managerial capacities of MAIL staff were improved, including those involved in planning, extension services and home economics. The capacities of other ministries were also improved, including the Ministry of Health. As a result, collaboration and coordination among government institutions and other stakeholders were enhanced and strengthened in support of food security and nutrition. However, the desired level of coordination was not yet reached, as the central level coordination unit foreseen to be established under the leadership of the second Vice President was still being developed.

50 The thematic cluster contributed to strengthening the strategic coordination capacities of governments and stakeholders for improved food security and nutrition across sectors, as per the following evidence:

- The intensive training provided by the thematic cluster to the staff of various ministries (MOPH, MOWA, MRRD and MAIL) and directorates within the ministries has helped these institutions understand the importance of integrating food security and nutrition. It has also conveyed the concerted efforts required to improve the FSN status of vulnerable people;
- Inter-ministerial coordination was found to be strengthened through joint meetings. Opportunities were provided to participate in the formation of AFSANA, particularly to review the document. The suggestions offered during the joint meetings were concrete and specific;
- Information and documents were shared frequently by related project coordinators with relevant directorates within the MAIL. This rarely happened before FAO's support;
- Intra-ministerial coordination was strengthened among different directorates of MAIL through formation of different working groups such as the FSN M&E group, and the planning group;
- Synergies were developed among the thematic cluster, IPC and FEWSNET for FSN information analysis; between MAIL and MOPH for FSN policy, information analysis and capacity building; and among MAIL and other UN agencies, including WFP and UNICEF, for AFSANA preparation;
- FSN coordination mechanisms were improved at MAIL (e.g. the policy taskforce and M&E working group);
- The thematic cluster worked closely with MAIL to support an integrated and comprehensive FSN coordination governance (e.g. FSN-IPC joint steering committee, FSN working group, FSN unit); high-level Steering Committee on FSN; and National

Technical Secretariat (to be housed at the Office of H.E. the Second Vice President) to operationalize AFSANA⁴;

- Although the sector-wide coordination mechanism had improved overall coordination, it remains a challenge. A culture of coordination in the country has yet to be established, which requires viewing the situation from the perspective of partners with regard to coordination, partnership and collaboration.

Finding of sub-question 4.2: What was the thematic cluster’s contribution to organizational output 10101: improving capacities of governments and stakeholders for developing sectoral and cross sectoral policy frameworks, investment plans and programmes for food security and nutrition?

The capacity of the government, especially MAIL and MOPH, for developing food security and nutrition policy frameworks was strengthened. As a result, the Afghanistan Food and Nutrition Security Agenda (AFSANA), which is a key policy and strategic framework for food and nutrition security, was agreed and endorsed by the office of the second Vice President. A food and nutrition security planning and implementation manual was prepared and submitted for endorsement by MAIL.

51 The capacities of governments and stakeholders for developing sectoral and cross-sectoral policy frameworks, investment plans and programmes for food security and nutrition was improved due to the thematic cluster’s contributions.

- As a result of a series of seven courses offered by the thematic cluster, the capacity of stakeholders in FSN, particularly MAIL, DAIL and MOPH, was developed, including the formulation of FSN policies;
- The capacities of MAIL staff on FSN policy and programming were enhanced through systematic efforts (basic training, on the job support, advance training, study tours, technical guidance, advisory services);
- The thematic cluster included different stakeholders in the process of formulating the FSN strategy, including NGOs such as Afghan Aid, which were involved to some extent in the preparation of FSN strategy;
- FAO, UNICEF and WFP jointly agreed to support the government to establish a high-level coordination platform to operationalize AFSANA;
- The Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), ToRs and implementation procedures were finalized for the establishment of the National Technical Secretariat. They were cleared by ODG, UN agencies, and the Vice President’s Office;
- Collaboration with various Directorates of MAIL, FAO and other stakeholders was facilitated;
- The thematic cluster carried out a number of capacity development efforts – including FSN policy development, issues and concepts; M&E; and FSN analysis – which enhanced the knowledge and skills of MAIL and FSN stakeholders. This enabled them to contribute to the FSN policy development process, including the policy taskforce and M&E working group. As a result, they were able to facilitate the policy process for strategy development work, and to analyse, plan and design various FSN programmes without the full-time engagement of international expert.

3.1 Synthesis and analysis (using the most significant change)⁵

52 The thematic cluster was found relevant to the national priority plan (NPP), particularly the NPP2 which concerns reducing food insecurity and malnutrition, and ending hunger. These projects are similar to the government’s National Programme for Food Security, which is popularly known as Food for Life – specifically its food security and nutrition components, which provide information on the food and nutrition security of Afghan men, women, girls, boys, and infants.

4 Though AFSANA was approved by GIRoA in 2013, it has not been fully operationalised due mainly to two factors: (1) There was a change in the government and new government took time to understand coordination mechanism under the leadership of Vice President and (2) the main person responsible for operationalising the structure was on training for about 4 months during which the process for institutionalisation could take pace. NAF which is a part of the AFSANA was found less complex as it is limited to the MOPH and MAIL. It is in a state of operation as it has developed tools necessary for implementation.

5 A detailed Output-level assessment of all the projects’ outputs is provided in Appendix 1

- 53 The thematic cluster was also found relevant from the perspective of FAO's Country Programming Framework (CPF), wherein food security and nutrition is an important element together with support to agricultural productive capacity.
- 54 The ultimate goal of the thematic cluster is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger through the creation of an enabling environment, including the formation of conducive policies, strategies, guidelines and institutions, and the strengthening of coordination among stakeholders. This will be achieved through interventions that develop people's capacities to deliver (and receive) goods and services; and through the implementation of productive initiatives to raise the incomes of vulnerable people in order to improve their food and nutrition security. The thematic cluster has somewhat contributed toward this goal and, therefore, was found relevant and effective from the perspective of the stated goals and outcomes.
- 55 To identify the significant change from the thematic cluster, the most significant change (MSC) approach was used, including the beneficiaries, project staff, FAO staff and partner organizations. The MSCs brought about by the thematic cluster are discussed below under each relevant project.
- 56 The establishment of three WTTTCs in Hirat, Kabul and Badakshan was reported as one of the most important outputs of the project, as it was found crucial to developing the capacities of rural, urban and peri-urban women – regarding both technical aspects and understanding the importance of a balanced diet. The women were found to be translating the knowledge and skills learned from WTTTCs into their own activities. To assess this, the evaluation team visited WTTTCs in Badambagh and reviewed their facilities, including the demonstration plots, curricula and training materials. The team also visited the trainees in two districts in Kabul Province to observe the products and conduct two FGDs. The curriculum included the components of overall development for women, such as technical aspects, group formation, and leadership development.
- 57 The team also observed the vegetables grown in the kitchen gardens, micro-gardens and roof gardens, as well as the processed products such as jam, pickles, jelly and murrumba. Through the FGDs, the team found that the vegetables they produced from the small plot of land were used for household consumption, which helped to improve dietary diversity. The team also found that households earned additional income from the sale of processed products. Some of the women had processed the vegetables before the WTTTC training; however it was only for home consumption and no systematic procedures were followed. After the training at the WTTTC, they knew the system of production and produced for commercial purposes.
- 58 Also based on the training of WTTTCs, the women formed community groups, conducted meetings, and discussed the issues confronting them. This brought them from the confinement of the home to a common meeting place, which was a step toward more mobility for women. Some women now consult WTTTC and DAIL for technical advice, which was not the case before. The meetings also contributed to community cohesiveness.
- 59 As a result of the increased individual capacity and additional income earned from the sale of the products, there has been less dependency of women on the income of husband and increased mobility. Furthermore, their prestige at home and in the community has increased and there has been less domestic violence, according to the participants of the FGDs. When asked to list three significant changes that they realized after the training with WTTTCs, the women responded: (i) skill in processing vegetables and fruits; (ii) self-employment; and (iii) increase in income. The establishment of WTTTCs was also rated one of the significant changes by the project and FAO staff.
- 60 CIGs established and functioning was one of the outputs of Outcome 2: "Collaboration and coordination strengthened among government and non-government institutions, CBOs and other stakeholders to support livelihoods and food security is strengthened." 181 CIGs were established with 3 730 beneficiaries as members. These groups were formed based on the interest of farmers to participate in the eight categories of identified livelihoods by baseline survey and livelihoods mapping. The CIGs received training in both managerial

and technical aspects. The approach was to provide training of trainers (TOTs) to lead farmers, who were selected based on defined criteria; the lead farmer would then provide training to other members. The lead farmers were found capable of managing the group, conducting meetings and continuing to identify livelihoods.

- 61 After the training, the farmers were provided with materials for demonstrating the production of cereals, vegetables and mushrooms. They used these materials with the recommended technologies. Though exact figure of productivity increase is yet to be assessed, concerned staff informed the evaluation team that there was an 80 percent adoption of the new technology. The DAIL staff at Dehdadi said there was a 56 percent increase in the yield of vegetables, such as cucumber, okra and cauliflower, through the use of the recommended technology. The use of the new skills that farmers learned from the training and demonstration contributed to the adoption of new technology, including using the right variety, applying the proper dose of fertilizers (in case of wheat), and production of spawn and mushrooms. The evaluation team visited five mushroom CIGs in Dehadadi district, observed mushroom seed and products, and interacted with producers individually as well as in an FGD. The mushrooms were produced by women lead farmers and by some members. Other members were found ready to produce once the spawn was available. The evaluation team learned of some changes made in the mushroom producers' community. The changes included self-employment, increased income from the sale of the products produced by women, and food diversification through the consumption of different vegetables and mushrooms.
- 62 The spawn production was found to be limited, as it is complicated to produce. Members had yet to learn spawn production technology and adopt it. They were coining the mushroom production with the availability of spawn. The evaluation team found two approaches taken to increase spawn availability: spawn was made available in Kabul province while importing from other countries, whereas it was produced locally in Balkh province. In Balkh- Dehdadi district, the plant protection laboratory was found producing spawn with FAO technical support and distributing it to the producers. In addition, FAO was also providing spawn production technology to some selected team leaders of producers in Dehdadi district of Balkh province. Despite this, spawn was not available to producers as needed, and the producers were waiting for spawn supply to plant the mushrooms. More importantly, the technology was not well transferred to government extension agents, as it was done by an FAO consultant directly with producers and the Plant Protection Lab.
- 63 One of the outputs was finalizing the FNS Strategic Framework, including clear procedures and processes for its implementation agreed by all stakeholders. The procedures were drafted with stakeholder involvement. They were found able to make quality comments on the draft, and to develop the FSN logframe. The FSN (including the procedures) is drafted and ready for signature. The major achievements under this output include the Afghan government's endorsement of the FSN framework (AFSANA); joint support from FAO, UNICEF and WFP for the government to establish a high-level coordination platform to operationalize AFSANA; finalization of the MoUs, ToRs and implementation procedures for the establishment of the National Technical Secretariat; the presentation of AFSANA at a cabinet meeting; and facilitating collaboration with various Directorates of MAIL, FAO and other stakeholders. A comprehensive policy and programming framework has been developed with cross-sectoral involvement. The framework is likely to be used in future, as it was developed in a participatory way.
- 64 In essence, the thematic cluster contributed to improvements in policy, individual and institutional capacities, and household food security and nutrition. The policy-related changes brought about by the thematic cluster included development of improved policy and programming on the comprehensive food security and nutrition framework; strategy and technical manual; national strategy on women in agriculture development; and capacity building framework.
- 65 The major changes in terms of institutional capacity include the enhanced human and institutional capacity of government staff regarding FSN; establishment of WTTTCs in three provinces; and improving organizations' access to information on FSN. The staff of the planning and monitoring department at central level learned to develop output and outcome level FSN indicators. The HED staff learned proposal writing, preparing better

reports, and conducting needs assessments, whereas extension staff learned livelihood data collection techniques and preparing district profiles based on household data.

3.2 Additional contributions

66 In addition to the most significant changes, the thematic cluster also contributed to the following changes:

- A district development plan was developed bringing related stakeholders together based on the baseline information collected from farmers in the project districts. The plan is more realistic than before, as it was based on recent statistics and by involving stakeholders.
- District Farmer Resource Centres and formation of CIGs are two major deviations that this project has introduced from the traditional extension system. Extension workers are now better equipped and have better knowledge and skills to address the FSN issues of farmers through supervision and guidance to CIGs.
- Improved market linkages contributed to better prices, thereby increasing income. For example, potato producers in Bamyan were linked with processing companies and markets, resulting in higher prices. There would have been better linkages developed and more realistic plans prepared if the interventions were based on a market demand approach. In this project, market demand was collected a few months after the project was established.
- The bi-laws of group formation were developed, lessons and fact sheets were documented, database/district profiles were created, and an FFS curriculum was developed.
- Food diversification and income were the major change in the community of mushroom producers, together with self-employment, increased capacity in mushroom production, and increased linkage with FAO staff and DAIL/HE staff.
- The extension model developed through this thematic cluster was also used by other agencies, including IFAD. The IFAD / Italian cooperation project was developed based on the extension approach used by the thematic cluster. Also, the project approaches were adopted by the MAIL extension directorate.
- The capacity of DAIL (plant protection) were developed in those provinces with project-related mushroom activities, including the extraction of mycelium from mushrooms and the production of spawn from it.
- MAIL staff have developed their capacities to analyse policy gaps in the ministry.
- The internal coordination was improved among food security stakeholders within MAIL as a result of sharing the ToRs, and through a series of meetings on IPC with the Steering Committee. Their level of coordination was improved to some extent, and the meetings have been held more than 10 times. Likewise, external coordination has also increased through a series of meetings, reviews of activities, and endorsement of AFSANA by the second Vice President's Office, involving different ministries. However, coordination and communication is still one of the major challenges among stakeholders of FSN, as the AFSANA is yet to be fully operationalized.
- AFSANA was used by USAID for mobilising the resources to develop a new project. However, some important stakeholders do not yet understand the importance of AFSANA. The Cooperative Directorate at the central level heard about it for the first time from the evaluation team, according to the Director and four related officers.
- While those involved in the preparation of AFSANA felt ownership, others expressed dissatisfaction as the draft document was not circulated to them after they provided comments for improvement.
- Access to information on food security and nutrition was improved through the development of a web-based Food Security and Nutrition Information System (FSNIS), which was comprised of fact sheets and briefs, a documentation center, agriculture, food system and nutrition relevant posters for public information campaigns; a data management system with a publicly accessible portal providing food security and nutrition information/data; and a website on various food security and nutrition information in the country. A quarterly food security and nutrition newsletter is now regularly issued as well.
- Staff capacity was improved to some extent, especially in developing brochures, proposals, writing reports, preparing work plans, and developing concept notes. However, this is a long-term process that needs to be continued by forthcoming projects.

- Staff capacity was enhanced on the technique of vegetable fruit processing, as a result of the training provided in Bangkok. This led to a change in training curricula, making it practice oriented rather than theory-driven. They also learned to prepare training materials. Likewise, the capacity of DAIL staff was increased on processing vegetables and fruits.

4. Assessment of thematic cluster implementation

67 Due to the national government's limited capacities, the direct implementation approach was appropriate. The selection of beneficiaries based on criteria was a good approach, but additional in-depth consultations would have yielded a better selection. Working through the existing structure was also a good approach, but reporting needs to be improved. More technical backstopping support from the regional FAO office is necessary. Partnerships and coordination needs to be further strengthened at all levels. Although the government was committed throughout the initial project, during the continuation and upscaling of good results (including the continuation of WTTTCs and expansion of the demand-driven comprehensive extension model) it was more interested in seeking external funds.

4.1 Adequacy of FAO's implementation approach to generate results

68 All three projects of this thematic cluster have a project office within MAIL. The budget is held by FAO. Major financial decisions are taken by FAO in consultation with MAIL. The thematic cluster plays the key role, and the role of MAIL and respective DAILs was found supportive. This approach of project implementation was found appropriate under the current context of low capacity of MAIL to deliver services effectively and generate time bound quality results. At the grassroots level, farmers' groups were created and training was provided to leaders of the groups who subsequently provided training to group members. Due to the strong support of the thematic cluster, the capacity of the district and sub-district extension workers from both MAIL and MRRD enhanced. The extension workers were conducting the training for CIGs. The capacity of the district and sub-district extension workers requires further strengthening to continue the initiated interventions. The farmer field school (FFS) approach was implemented, and also requires additional oversight and support.

69 The implementation approach, however, would have been more effective if additional staff, especially the technical staff, were based in the field to support the three National project staff at MAIL in Kabul; if more sharing of information among stakeholders were done; and if coordination with all projects and programmes of MAIL were further strengthened in the planning and implementation of the interventions, however, the coordination with other MAIL projects is institutionally more complicated, much of which is donor driven. Several proposals have been made but action on the part of the MAIL management seems to await the results of the MAIL reform process.

4.2 Beneficiary identification

70 The beneficiaries were selected using project specific selection criteria developed through consultation with MAIL. The thematic cluster made a list of closely related stakeholders and selected the ones that are relevant to specific interventions at centre and field level. The criteria for field interventions included poverty rate, level of malnutrition, households headed by women, number of children under five years, size of family, and landlessness or holding land below 0.4 ha. The selection was done jointly by central, provincial and district authorities. In one case, the thematic cluster collected comprehensive livelihood data from the households and selected those households who were willing to be in the specific community interest groups. The selection was done in direct consultation and involvement of MAIL, MRRD, DAIL, CDC and communities. The 072/LUX project introduced a framework for targeting and selecting beneficiaries involving several stakeholders at different levels and throughout the process.

4.3 Appropriateness of the institutional set-up and management arrangement

71 All three projects of the thematic cluster were implemented through existing government structures at the central, provincial and district level, where relevant. The counterparts were chosen from the existing system. Project interventions were organized in collaboration with the respective counterparts. A close link was maintained with relevant ministries and directorates/departments at various levels. In addition, CDCs under the DRRD were also

linked at the community level. Informal communications and meetings were found taking place to strengthen coordination among stakeholders. The newly established WTTTCs provided technical training mainly on vegetable and fruit processing. The WTTTCs also had demonstration plots for practical training. This contributed significantly to learning new skills, and participants applied that knowledge in practice. These institutional arrangements were found appropriate to manage the projects.

4.4 Performance of the operational management function of the monitoring system

- 72 The thematic cluster interventions were found to be monitored by the FAO Afghanistan country office operation unit consisting of national and international staff. Field missions were held, which were discussed in back-to-office reports. Progress reports used a results-based template.

4.5 Appropriateness of the technical support provided by FAO headquarters, regional and country offices

- 73 The technical support was provided mainly by FAO's Asia Pacific Regional Office and FAO Afghanistan. The support from the regional office was mostly through email, Skype discussions and field missions. The LTO from the regional office visited Afghanistan in connection with providing technical support – mainly for the projects 075/GER and 069/GER of the thematic cluster, as per the work plan. FAO HQ was found to be involved in providing clearance for the AFSANA document, concept notes and international staff recruitment.

4.6 Synergetic effects developed in partnership for programme delivery

- 74 The discussions with various stakeholders revealed that the thematic cluster outcomes involved the contribution of outputs of different projects under study. The development of AFSANA, for example, was the result of FAO, WFP and UNICEF on one hand, and MAIL, MOPH, MRRD, MOWA, and MOE on the other. Likewise, the FSN strategy emerged through the joint action of three projects under the thematic cluster, and MAIL and its directorates. There was coordination between the projects 069/GER and 075/GER to formulate the strategy on women in agriculture development. The synergetic efforts of the projects 069/GER and 058/NOR resulted in the mushroom production by women in Balkh province. The synergy development was not limited to the three projects under study. For example, project 069/GER had collaborated with other projects, such as the Horticulture Cooperatives Development Project, Beekeeping and Animal Husbandry Development Program, Agriculture Development Funds, International Federation of Agricultural Funds, Afghanistan Agricultural Extension Project, and the National Horticulture and Livestock Projects (NHLP). 069/GER in association with USAID project with technical support from 075/GER jointly organize and facilitate M&E training to 43 MAIL staff. After the training, 075/GER have engaged most of the training participants to carry out the M&E system review process at MAIL, and later on provided them capacity develop training to use the updated FSN M&E system. This has contributed to keep consistency to provide systematic support to MAIL. These collaborations contributed to plan, initiate and implement some joint activities for the empowerment of women in agriculture for improved household food security and nutrition.

4.7 Government commitment

- 75 The discussions with various stakeholders revealed that the government was very involved in terms of mobilising related institutions and human resources, although not to the desired level. The commitment of MAIL and mobilising its Directorates and Departments to support the project – including by participating actively in technical working groups on FSN policy, M&E, and providing facilities (e.g. space for project offices, WTTTC, demonstration plots, plant protection lab for mycelium production) – show the government's commitment toward the implementation of agriculture development programmes and projects.

5. Assessment of cross-cutting issues and sustainability

76 This section analyses the gender issues reflected in the implementation of the thematic cluster, capacity development of duty bearers and rights holders, partnerships and alliances, and sustainability and ownership.

5.1 Gender

77 Gender issues were found to be somewhat reflected in all three projects of the thematic cluster. This was ascertained by reviewing their products and speaking with target groups, project staff, counterparts and government entities. The products, such as AFSANA and the FSN strategy document and policy action plan, have given adequate weight to gender issues, including a detailed section in each of the documents. Household decision making power was found to be enhanced as a result of the extension improvement activities, including participation in common interest group, income generation activities, earned additional income, and the use of the income for items needed by the households.

78 Women were specifically targeted by the cluster in the FSN development process. Mushroom production, vegetable production, and fruit and vegetable processing are some activities that were specifically targeted to women. The formation of common interest groups for women resulted in their social and economic empowerment by creating institutions and strengthening the bargaining power through economies of scale not only to access markets but also to demand services. Female-specific roles were also included in the AFSANA and FSN strategic plans. Thus, the enabling environment for the inclusion of women in development processes was created through FAO initiatives, including the projects under study. The participation of women in agriculture development activities and the adoption of technology – including mushroom cultivation, line planting of crops, drip irrigation, bottle irrigation, compost making, land preparation, adapting micro-gardening technology, kitchen gardening in urban and peri-urban area, eating diversified food, and providing complementary feeding to children and lactating and pregnant women – are some of the changes brought about by the thematic cluster. There has been increased knowledge and skill development for women in mushroom farming and technology transfer of mushroom cultivation. These skills were also transferred from the women trainees to community farmers. This means that women are acting as informal extension workers in the community, which was a role previously filled only by men.

5.2 Capacity development

79 In addition to developing technical capacities, the service providers were also to some extent capacitated and enabled to conduct household level assessments, computerize information, form farmers' groups, and coordinate support from different projects to provide services to vulnerable and food insecure families.

80 The capacity of MAIL has been enhanced through practical training in which FAO staff worked together with the taskforce group in terms of (i) making quality comments on FSN Strategy and Planning and Implementation Manual, and holding discussions more focused on specific problems; (ii) preparing logframes; (iii) analysing the policy gap at MAIL; (iv) developing and identifying the output level and outcome level indicators of food security (MIS Unit); (v) developing database system (MIS unit); (vi) collecting FSN data (M&E unit).

81 MoPH is planning to prepare the Public Nutrition Policy Strategy based on the knowledge and multi-sectorial stakeholder relationships gained during the development of AFSANA. This capacity was developed mainly because of MoPH's participation in cluster activities, including several technical trainings.

82 In addition to the technical capacity, the capacity of the home economics staff was improved in monitoring, report and proposal writing, and conducting training needs assessments. As

far as providing better services to vulnerable women is concerned, the home economic workers are stationed at provincial DAIL offices and they visit nearby districts. One of the major limitations is that they cannot ride motorbikes, as local culture forbids it. They need vehicles to move, which are not always easily available.

- 83 The coordination between DAIL and CDC, DAIL and DRRD, as well as DRRD and CDC were found to be strengthened. The household survey of project 072/LUX was conducted in coordination with the District Governor, District Council (Shura) and CDC. They worked together to identify the households for needs assessment surveys, and helped to manage CIG. In addition to the CDC, there are 181 newly established CIGs, which could also be considered as unregistered CBOs. The project 072/LUX collaborated with the CIGs and provided technical and material support to the members of CIGs on mushroom, vegetable and wheat production. It was reported that production increased by about 30-40 percent through the FFS approach, especially in vegetable production such as cabbage. Women's self-employment and the diversification of diets were achievements noted by the women's focus groups. The collaboration therefore has contributed to improved livelihoods and food security.

5.3 Partnership and alliances

- 84 Vulnerable food insecure households needed adequate and quality services to address their needs, improve the situation of women, and help them to contribute more effectively and efficiently to household food security and nutrition. This included developing women's capacities, skills and knowledge, and enabling them to adopt more effective agricultural practices. This resulted in increased agricultural production and productivity for improving household food security. They also needed extension services to help them generate income through produce sales, which contributed to improved nutrition. These needs of the vulnerable men and women were to some extent addressed by MAIL/DAIL at the central level and DAIL/HE/DRRD at the provincial and district level where the projects were implemented.

5.4 Sustainability and ownership of results

- 85 The thematic cluster has brought about some changes in the institutional, technical, social and economic aspects of the vulnerable communities where it worked. For example, the establishment of WTTTC, improved coordination⁶, and access to information are some important institutional changes. The continuity of these institutional changes, however, is not yet clear. The government wants to ensure the continuity of these changes through external support. Among the government personnel the evaluation team spoke with, the idea of using internal resources to continue the project was not widely discussed. Although there were some initiatives expanded to other areas, especially the women's livelihood related activities and integrated extension model, these were done with external support. The evaluation team was informed that assets among CIGs have been created with capacities among services delivery agents (MAIL and MRRD extension workers) to continue their livelihoods beyond the life of the project. In addition, the infrastructure for an integrated rural development approach has been laid out to ensure sustainability and facilitate future work in improving food security among these households.
- 86 Due to the government's resource constraints, the deciding factor to continue the positive project results depends largely on the donor community's interest. Since the donor community seems interested to support the Food Security Cluster, there is a high likelihood of continuing the WTTTCs, as well as the coordination mechanisms at central and local levels, and of upscaling the demand-driven and integrated extension model. The women farmers engaged in vegetable and fruit processing, kitchen gardening and micro gardening are likely to continue their engagement, as they have well-developed technical and financial capacities with which to do so and require minimal support from existing government mechanisms. In the case of mushroom production, activities are expected to continue in Dehdadi district as mycelium and spawn production technology is institutionalized with provincial DAIL facilities; whereas in other areas this technology is yet to be localized. In

⁶ Though coordination is not at the desired level, it was found to have improved to some extent.

other areas, mushroom culture (mycelium) and spawn are currently imported, which is a limiting factor for continuing mushroom production. This technology, which is rated good by the completed project 069/GER, seems to face institutional constraints for its sustainability unless it is supported by forthcoming projects.

- 87 The thematic cluster could have contributed to more sustainable results had it produced locally the technology for mycelium extraction from mushrooms and production of spawn; had women extension workers in DAIL district for social mobilization and technology transfer; provided greenhouse technology to all women farmers to whom the materials to construct greenhouses were given; provided training on packaging products in addition to training provided for processing vegetables and fruits; and developed market linkages along with production.

6. Conclusions

Conclusion 1: The food security cluster has contributed to women empowerment through the formation of common interest groups for women resulted in their social and economic empowerment by creating institutions and strengthening the bargaining power through economies of scale not only to access markets but also to demand enhanced agricultural services to women, thus improving household food security and nutrition through building the technical capacity of both the duty bearer MAIL/HED/DAIL staff and the right holder women of targeted rural, urban and peri-urban areas. The women were found to be adopting new agricultural technology and skills. Production was increased through the FFS approach, especially in vegetable production. Increased self-employment and household income were evident, including major livelihoods achievements. As a result of beneficiary participation in the groups, they were able to focus discussions on particular topics and reach a conclusion, which was not often the case prior to the project.

Cohesiveness has increased among the group members due to group meetings and discussions on community/group problems and solutions. Participants also took part in community activities such as the cooperative society. The mobility of trained women was increased, and they can now visit the extension office/training centre to request extension information. Their prestige at home and status in the family has increased as a result of their ability to discuss nutrition and food issues, and as a result of earned income which is largely used for family necessities such as food, clothes and children school supplies.

Conclusion 2: The thematic cluster was found to be contributing to the enhancement of capacities, institutional structures and processes (enabling environment at the institutional and individual levels) for improved policy development, programme design and implementation procedures. The capacity of taskforce group members was enhanced through practical training in which FAO staff worked together with the taskforce group in terms of (i) making quality comments on FSN Strategy and Planning and Implementation Manual, and holding discussions more focused on specific problems; and (ii) preparing logframes for FSN. The capacity of the M&E system was improved for collecting FSN data, managing the database, as guided by the result frame, and analysing policy gaps at the ministry. A comprehensive policy and programming framework was developed with cross-sectoral involvement. These frameworks serve as an enabling environment and are likely to be used in the future, as they were developed in a participatory way. Greater access to information on food security and nutrition was provided through a quarterly food security and nutrition newsletter, and a web-based Food Security and Nutrition Information System (FSNIS).

Conclusion 3: There was some institutional improvement through increased coordination among stakeholders at the district level. Extension workers are now better equipped and have better knowledge and skills with which to address the FSN issues of farmers through supervision and guidance to CIGs. Food diversification and increased income were the major changes in the community of mushroom producers, together with self-employment, increased capacity in mushroom production, spawn production, and increased linkage with FAO staff and DAIL/HE staff. The capacity of DAIL (plant protection) in one province was developed in the extraction of mycelium from mushrooms and the production of spawn. A district development plan was developed, bringing related stakeholders together based on the baseline information in the project districts. The plan is more realistic than before, as it was planned based on recent statistics and with participatory demand driven planning implementation and monitoring.

It was evident that if more of the provincial and district level stakeholders were involved in preparing the FSN strategy, the level of understanding and ownership at the local level would have been strengthened. Similarly, if the FSN M&E system were integrated into MAIL/DAIL M&E systems, the capacity development and understanding of FSN would have been decentralised at the local level, rather than preparing a separate FSN M&E system. Likewise the thematic cluster would have been more relevant to targeted populations if: CIGs of women were formed from the beginning of the project; extension functions were made even clearer to DAIL districts and provinces, FAO and HE/DAIL; coordination between HED and the extension directorate was strengthened by improving the structure; arrangements for the participation of 12 groups were made, which had been unable to pay for the cost of inputs.

Conclusion 4.1: The FSN thematic cluster has to some extent contributed to enhanced coordination, both vertically and horizontally. There was better centre-province/district coordination than before. DAIL and DRRD were found to be working together in the district as service providers. The strengthened coordination contributed to plan, initiate and implement some joint activities for the improved household food security and nutrition. However, the coordination level was still in the early stages and sustainability is not assured. Similarly, the active dialogue with UN partners and other donors operating in the field of food and nutrition security made the project delivery more efficient and effective. The collaboration originating in the UNDAF working groups at the UN level and the joint efforts in planning and further developing the AFSANA and Nutrition Action Framework resulted in sharing resources among FAO, WFP and UNICEF, and the establishment of a national FSN high level steering committee at the Vice President's Office. The inter-ministerial coordination and collaboration efforts contributed to establish and improve synergies and linkages among the food security and nutrition interventions. However, partnerships and collaborations need further strengthening to ensure sustainability of the results.

The thematic cluster contributed to strengthening the capacities of the government and stakeholders for strategic coordination across sectors and stakeholders. This was done by developing synergies among the thematic cluster, IPC and FEWSNET for FSN information analysis; between MAIL and MOPH for FSN policy, information analysis and capacity building; and among MAIL and other UN agencies, including WFP and UNICEF, for AFSANA preparation. The thematic cluster worked closely with MAIL in order to support integrated and comprehensive FSN coordination governance (e.g. FSN-IPC joint steering committee, FSN working group, FSN unit), and a high-level Steering Committee on FSN and National Technical Secretariat (to be housed at the Office of H.E. the Second Vice President) to operationalize AFSANA. A culture of coordination in the country has yet to be established, which requires viewing the situation from the perspective of partners with regard to coordination, partnership and collaboration.

Conclusion 4.2: The capacities of governments and stakeholders for developing sectoral and cross sectoral policy frameworks, investment plans and programmes for food security and nutrition was improved to some extent due to the thematic cluster's contribution. The cluster has carried out a number of capacity development efforts – such as FSN policy development, issues and concepts; M&E; and FSN analysis – which enhanced the knowledge and skills of MAIL and FSN stakeholders, enabling them to contribute to the FSN policy development process. As a result, without the full-time engagement of an international expert they were able to facilitate the policy process for relevant policy and strategy development work; and carry out their respective work in relation to analysing, planning and designing various FSN programmes.

7. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: to FAO *Expand and strengthen the capacity development activities of duty bearers, strengthen cooperation and coordination among MAIL/DAIL/HED, and invest more in developing M&E systems and capacities.*

- 88 The low technical capacities of MAIL, DAIL and HED staff were found to result from the projects' direct implementation modality. To improve the capacity of government staff, FAO should identify areas where it can play a facilitating role, rather than implementing activities by itself. FAO should explore innovative ways to improve MAIL's technical and managerial capacities, even in the post-conflict context.
- 89 Capacity development of duty bearers and strengthening cooperation and coordination. Due to low capacities of duty bearers in coordination, partnership, collaboration and cooperation, inter-ministerial, inter-directorate, inter-departmental and vertical coordination were not much improved. In the future, FAO should design projects to develop the managerial capacities of duty bearers, with a particular focus on local resource management and changing attitudes regarding what can be accomplished with local resources.
- 90 Monitoring needs to be strengthened at all levels: beneficiary, district, province, DAIL/ DRRD, MAIL and the M&E system. To improve the monitoring system and conduct effective monitoring, FAO COA may consider recruiting an M&E professional to: monitor all projects, develop a monitoring system within each project, provide inputs/feedback for developing indicators for each project, carry out database management, manage evaluations, prepare the management response to the evaluation, and facilitate its implementation.

Recommendation 2: to FAO *Support the expansion of local production of mycelium and spawn for the continuation and scaling up of mushroom production, and strengthen linkages with the private sector.*

- 91 *Local production of mycelium and spawn for the continuation and scaling up of mushroom production.* One of the major limitations for the expansion and continuation of mushroom production was the unavailability of mycelium and spawn; it was not produced locally in several places despite the availability of the technology to produce it. As the production of mushrooms was found to be highly lucrative, emphasis should be placed on improving local production of mycelium and spawn. As it did in Balkh, FAO should provide training to DAIL's plant protection lab in each province where the thematic cluster works on extracting mycelium from mushrooms, and producing spawn locally.
- 92 The provision of inputs for livelihoods and development of groups to increase economies of scale are part of the productive social protection mechanism will not cover the large number of vulnerable people and has a limited impact. FAO should promote the development of savings and credit organisation at the grassroots level in form of cooperatives to facilitate loans.

Recommendation 3: to FAO *Provide programmatic support to the implementation of the FSN strategy.*

- 93 FAO should develop a new project that supports the implementation of the FSN strategy. This could be accomplished by bringing together the government, civil society and market sector with a long-term vision to improve agricultural productivity and the incomes of small-scale food producers – particularly women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, and pastoralists. The project activities could include the use of high-yielding technologies, secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets, and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment. The project should also support the government to create an enabling environment for gender-balanced teams at the national, provincial and district levels.

8 Lessons learned

- 94 Systematic capacity development approach enhances the capacity of both duty bearers and rights holders. The thematic cluster has applied this approach effectively at the central as well as the beneficiary level in FSN strategy development, fruit and vegetable processing, and mushroom cultivation.
- 95 Political stability plays an important role in establishing high-level, multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms. Although the establishment of the AFSANA secretariat was well received by the previous government, detailed discussions were needed with the new government to revive the agenda.
- 96 The project encountered a number of security issues in 2014, due in part to the prolonged electoral process, which reduced the pace of project delivery. The evaluation mission also faced security-related delays, and had to change its original plan in 2015. These issues should be considered in further planning.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Output level assessment

Project: GCP/AFG/069/GER

This was done by developing and finalizing the national strategy on women in agriculture, capacity building framework, a national plan of action for women in agriculture and 12 provincial action plans and prepared a schedule for addressing the needs of the women in the concerned communities and undertaken intensive trainings, established demonstration plots, organized exchange visits and developed training materials focusing on specific food security issues. In addition, based on designed activities and training different projects were designed for some provinces including kitchen gardens in Parwan, green houses and mushroom farms in Badakshan, and establishment of orchards in Istalif, Kabul. Part of the contribution was also from the establishment of inter-ministerial coordination mechanism which helped in strengthening coordination among MAIL/HED/DAIL/Partners; MRRD, MOWA; and FAO and other UN agencies, to some extent. However, the coordination between the DAIL and the project was not to the desired level as expressed by DAIL in Kabul. These results indicators have contributed to the attain the output 1 of the project 069/GER which is stated as "MAIL's strategic objective and approach to provide agriculture services to women for improving household food security and nutrition, within its wider policy framework, is developed, documented, endorsed and disseminated." This logframe progress was further verified with project partners and other relevant stakeholders and was found valid.

Regarding the output 2 of the same project (069/GER), "Pilot provincial women resource, training and technology transfer centres are established in priority provinces (identified by MAIL, where core resources are secured)", the progress was found as per the given indicators. Three Women Technology Transfer and Training Centres (WTTTC) were established and operational in Hirat, Kabul and Badakshan. The Centres were found equipped with materials, furniture, and trained human resources to manage centres, demonstration plots. Women's were trained on fruit and vegetable processing, kitchen gardening, green house technology and micro-gardening who were found to have the learnt technology used. However, the evaluation team noted the weak cooperation from MAIL Department in Badambagh, Kabul province.

As far as the third output "MAIL/HEDs technical capacity with regard to household food security and nutrition is strengthened" is concerned, it was also found to have some way achieved while assessing through the given five indicators. Indicator (a) is about getting support by 140 staff members (70 HED and 70 Agriculture Extension Officers) for developing their technical capacities, of which 40 (20 HED and 20 Agric Extension) are based at national level, 100 of them are based at the 18 provinces. This was found achieved as 150 staff were trained and placed them at both national and provincial level. The indicator (b) provincial staff members receive more intensive support, such as on the job training, technical supervision (6 HED, 6 Agriculture Extension) was also achieved as provincial staff got training on monitoring and evaluation, training needs assessment (TNA), report and proposal writing. With respect to indicator (c) In total 140 staff received support to develop their technical capacities (70 HED and 70 Agriculture Extension), capacity-building measures include pre and in-service trainings, on the job-trainings, trainings, exposure visits, field exchanges, study tour within the country and abroad). At least 50 percent of the staff members supported is women, it was found partially achieved as 120 HED staff from the center and provinces under the project coverage trained in three regions on food processing mushroom cultivation and mushroom mycelium and spawn production. The capacity of these staff, however, was not fully developed as they were not able to produce mycelium and spawn which was still being imported from other countries including Pakistan. Regarding the indicator (d) In total 140 staff members, (70 HED and 70 Agriculture Extension, at least 50 percent of the trainees are women, almost 99% were women in a total of 120 participants. The indicator (e) At least 6 training packages are accredited was also well achieved as nine training packages developed.

Output 4 "MAIL is supported in building up sustainable project management with regard to women, agriculture and household food security, including planning, implementation, supervision and monitoring structures at national and provincial level, allowing effective implementation and regular project adjustments" was reported to have been fully achieved. The evaluation examined

this claim analysing each indicator of this output. Out of six indicators of this output, five were found achieved. The indicator (a) Effective project management system is in place (including planning documents, work plans, annual work plans, monitoring reports, evaluation results) was fully achieved with the HED staff being able to plan documents and develop their own work plan and annual plan. MAIL/HED relevant provincial staff members are able to report from selected provinces to the central level regularly as per standard formats of reporting. The reports were also submitted in time and at regular intervals and monitoring visits are undertaken by HED, MAIL. The indicator (b) Completion of at least one senior management level meeting discussing results and plan adjustments of food and nutrition security interventions was also achieved fully. The indicator (c) Reports are submitted in time and are of adequate quality was also achieved as the reports are also submitted in time and at regular intervals monitoring visits are undertaken by HED, MAIL. The indicator (d) Regular monitoring visits are completed (10 percent of target group) is also achieved with monitoring of 636 beneficiaries which is 10.2% of 6237. The indicator (e) Monitoring reports are completed (including analysis and recommendations) was also found done with the development of monitoring guidelines and completion of the report of the 632 beneficiaries monitored. Regarding the indicator (f) Management in place (impact and output monitoring, regular reporting ensured at all levels, the progress was halfway done with the submission of the annual national report to Kabul governor, visit to 10% of the beneficiaries, submission of the 12 provincial plans to HED, submission of one monitoring plan by each of the provinces and 3 such reports by pilot provinces to HED.

Output 5 of the project 069/GER is stated as MAIL in particular HED is knowledgeable in all aspects regarding fundraising and resource mobilization activities. This output has six indicators and the status of each indicator is given below. Indicator (a) At least 2Mi US\$ external funding has been raised for projects (included in Provincial Development Plans and) implemented in at least 18 provinces. The status of this indicator is that there has been no external fund raised despite that proposals were developed through the project support. Indicator (b) No. of project proposals designed and shared (every year at least 5 proposals at central level, focusing on central level actions and field level implementation in any of the 18 provinces) and 3 for each pilot province (6 provincial proposals). As per this indicator, three concept notes of USD 4.8 million World Bank to, USD 2.5 million to Germany and USD 1 Million were developed for HED and submitted for funding in the centre. In addition, one concept for WFP funding developed. The indicator (c) No of projects funded and under implementation: Every year at least 3 funded through national level resourcing and 2 per pilot provinces). To this end, four projects were funded by external sources as follows. Parwan: Kitchen gardening funded from AAEP; Badakhshan: Installation of two greenhouses by the financial assistance of Vision Supply and Establishment of Mushroom Farm by WFP; and Kabul: Establishment of orchards in Istalif by the NHLP contribution. In addition, there were co-financing by UNDP and IFAD for conducting two national workshops. The indicator-wise analysis reveals that the output 5 was partially achieved though it is claimed for 100% achievement in the progress report.

In summary, the project 069/GER has contributed to the results largely as specified in the project logframe. The project could have been contributed more if the level of cooperation and coordination among the related stakeholders was strengthened, if technical capacity of the MAIL/HED were further strengthened and more synergy developed among the existing projects of FAO.

Project: GCP/AFG/072/LUX

The project has three outcomes and eight outputs. The results of the projects are analysed below:

Outcome 1 "Central and decentralized government institutions successfully facilitate and coordinate needed support to vulnerable and food insecure households" is assessed based on the extent to which the food security of vulnerable households is enhanced. There has been some income raised by the farmers from the cultivation of mushroom in Dehdadi district. Production has increased as a result of practice of new technology. The use of the new skills that they learn from the training and demonstration provided by the project has contributed to the adoption of new technology, especially in use of right variety, proper dose of fertilisers in case of wheat and production of spawn and mushroom.

This outcome 1 has three outputs and output 1.1 is stated as "Baseline survey of demographic indicators consolidated in a database". This output has three indicators and its assessment is done

by analyzing the progress in the indicators. The indicator (a) is stated that the baseline household information included in a functioning national statistics and food security information system. The progress so far in this indicator is that household survey in project targeted districts has been completed and databased is managed in excel sheet for further utilization. It is yet to be fully included into national statistics and food security information system. The next indicator (b) is about the mapping of livelihoods systems. It has been already mapped and 79 livelihoods were identified which were grouped into eight categories. The indicator (c) is stated as MAIL and other partners benefit from access to improved information to inform policy formulation and programme development. After completion of survey, the district profile was computerized in excel sheet and submitted to DAIL director of both province (Balkh and Bamyan). These data are supposed to be used for future plan. As of now evidence of being these data used for policy formulation and programme development is not available. The progress report has reported 100% achievement for this output. Since the national statistics and food security information system have not fully included the HH information and that the data are yet to be fully used for policy formulation and policy development, it cannot be said 100% achievement, these are likely to be done fully during the remaining period of the project. Therefore, likelihood of full achievement of this output is high.

Output 2 of this outcome is about baseline survey of social indicators conducted. Yes, the baseline survey is conducted. It has three indicators. Indicator (a) is sex disaggregated baseline information on household nutrition, incomes, post-harvest losses, processing, food insecurity, production systems, consolidated. The data are sex disintegrated in many respects but not all. The data on postharvest loss, production system and household nutrition are not sex disintegrated. Another indicator (b) is about the conduct of needs assessment. Yes, the needs assessment was done. Next indicator (c) is stated as information on project achievements in targeted areas is quantifiable. Yes, the achievements are quantified on production and training aspect. As much progress has been made, here again, this output seems to be achieved fully within the project period.

Output 3 "Institutional and human capacity of MAIL and MRRD offices enhanced in accordance with needs identified through baseline survey" has also three indicators. The indicator (a) is about training and mobilisation of MAIL/MRRD staff in target districts. A total 16 staff were trained, equipped with motorcycles, computer, printer and provide internet and electricity facilitation, office stationary, fuel and maintenance cost of the motor bikes and mobilised in two target districts. Next indicator (b) is about training of MAIL/MRRD officers in targeted and neighbouring districts. Project information reveals that there were 25 MAIL staff in targeted district and 22 MAIL officers from neighbouring districts who got need based trainings on (conducting of check list survey, group formation, bottom up planning, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, food and livelihood security, participatory extension, and nutrition). Additionally, 7 project counterparts in Bamyan were trained for seven days in sustainable agriculture and livestock management by HELVETES with coordination of the project. The 3rd indicator (c) is about making use of equipment and materials provided. It was found that staff made use of equipment and material provided to them including the motorbikes and stationaries. The reported 80% progress for this output looks valid based on the above analysis.

Outcome 2 is stated as "Collaboration and coordination strengthened among government and non-government institutions, community-based organizations (CBOs) and other stakeholders to support livelihoods and food security is strengthened." It has three indicators. Indicator (a) is about the establishment of a coordination framework at the centralized and decentralized level. Yes the coordination framework at both levels is established. At central level coordination framework established in MAIL Extension General Directorate with membership from statistics, Cooperatives, M&E, Horticulture, Extension, Plan and policy, Home economy, MAIL, FAO, project national coordinator and subject matter specialists (GOV counterparts). At provincial level Coordination frame work established at provincial DAIL with membership from provincial HED, DRRD and Cooperatives as well as District DAIL, mobilisers of DRRD and CBOs. The next indicator (b) is about linkages/partnerships established with academic and research institutions, NGOs and to on-going projects and initiatives. It was found that these partnerships are yet to be established. Similarly, the next indicator (c) stakeholder partnerships established to support growth and development of CIGs. This indicator was found progressed well where close partnership was found among DAIL, HED, FAO, DRRD. This partnership provided Mushroom production TOT in Dehdadi district of Balkh province who supported up to know 100 women including 2 NGOs female staff from ACTED. The trained 100 women are organised in 5 CIGs and have been producing mushroom. The reported 100% achievement in the progress report needs to be corrected as the indicator (b) was not fully achieved.

This outcome has four outputs. Output 1 is stated as CIGs established and functioning. It has three indicators. The indicator (a) is about forming 200 CIGs in targeted districts. So far 181 CIGs were formed with 3730 beneficiaries as members. Indicator (b) is about providing training on group management, financial and administrative issues and inputs to the 200 CIGs. The achievement on this indicators is that out of 181 CIGs 163 CIGs provided with inputs and 218 Key members of 158 CIGs got training on basic principle of group formation, administrative and financial issues. The indicator (c) is about registration and use of revolving funds by the CIGs. The progress is that Extension Directorate was supported for development of by- law for registration of CIG, the by-law has been approved by Minister and other process of registration is ongoing. The revolving fund utilization has not yet materialized, though the process for recruiting a consultant to study the revolving fund is in the final stage. The reported progress of 181 group formation is correct but registration, training, and revolving fund mobilization is not done by all 181 CIGs formed.

Output 2 of this outcome is stated as "Technical capacity of CIGs and MAIL in agricultural production, post-harvest handling, processing (including linkages to nutrition and food safety) and marketing developed and strengthened." It has four indicators. The indicator (a) is about the technical training of the 200 CIGs. The achievement is that the 163 CIG's who were supported with inputs got technical training on the commodity provided to them including 5 women groups who got training on mushroom cultivation. The indicator (b) is about 10 % increase in net income of households from the adoption of improved practices/technologies. It is not yet known and the end line survey report will indicate the % increased. Indicator (c) is about 10 % reduction in post-harvest losses. It will also be assessed by the end-line survey. The indicator (d) about number of households with increased and diversified food consumption patterns. This will also be known through the end line survey. The reported 50% progress seems correct and this seems to be achieved within the project period.

Output 3 is about establishment of Farmers' Field Schools. It has two indicators. The indicator (a) is about development of 6 FFS curricula. It was found that three curricula were developed on grape, wheat and vegetable and remaining three are likely to be developed during the remaining period. Next indicator (b) is about implementation of 4 TOT for FFS programme. This was fully done with 4 ToTs conducted on Grape, wheat, vegetable and mushroom production for women groups.

Output 4 of this outcome is establishment of linkages between producers and private service providers. It has three indicators. The indicator (a) is about number of CIGs supported with basic collection, processing and storage facilities. It is not done yet and is planned for the year 2016. Indicator (b) is about exposure of number of CIGs to market opportunities through agricultural fairs, etc. Achievement is that 50 CIGs exposed to market during agriculture fairs. The third indicator (c) is about linkage of number of CIGs to service providers - local finance institutions, transport service providers, private input suppliers. The achievement is that 80 farmers groups from Phase-I of the project linked with other initiatives (in Qarabagh district 61 CIG's linked with NHLP, in Surkhrod 19 CIGs link with the Jalalabad market) and with private seed enterprises. The CIGs, however, were not linked to the local finance institutions and transport service providers.

The outcome 3 is stated as "Model extension approach implemented to enhance national service and input provision framework." The evaluation team was informed that 80% of the project approaches were adopted by MAIL Extension Directorate with support from IFAD/Italian cooperation projects. Elements of the approaches demonstrated by project used by MAIL in SARD Project as well as IFAD funded project. The demand driven extension approaches are adopted by MAIL, and would like to expand the model to 50 new districts.

This outcome has one output which is stated as experiences and lessons learnt documented and disseminated. This output has 5 indicators. The indicator (a) is about development of 8 of fact sheets. There has been 4 fact sheets drafted regarding the production of wheat, potato, vegetable and mushroom production. Another indicator (b) is formulation of 8 policy recommendations. The achievement is that policy recommendations on developing of district profile, creating of common interest groups, registration of the groups, are drafted. Next indicator (c) is 8 documents that summarize lessons learnt is partly achieved with drafting of 4 documents. Similar situation is found with indicator (d) which is about production of 8 guidelines that 4 guidelines on wheat, mushroom, grape and vegetables sub projects implementation are developed. The final indicator (e) 10 extension messages developed was also found in right direction as there were 10 extension messages (on wheat production, variety maintenance, weed control of wheat, production of

potato, potato seed selection, storage, vegetable production, plastic tunnel establishment, organic fertilizer development) drafted.

The project 072/LUX is likely to achieve all stated outputs and outcomes within the project period. One of the issues with this project is in reporting. The reporting by this project is not done on the basis of indicators. That has led this project to report more than what is shown by the indicator.

Project: GCP/AFG/075/GER

Impact: The Food insecurity and malnutrition of vulnerable groups has reduced. Indicator for the impact of the project is "Chronic malnutrition and stunting rates have been reduced by at least 10 percentage points by 2016." It is not yet the time to assess the impact of the project.

The Main Outcome of the project is stated as the capacity of MAIL and its partners to formulate and implement policies, programmes and projects that comprehensively address food and nutrition security problems is improved and consolidated. The outcome has four indicators. Indicator (a) is a comprehensive Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Strategic Framework have been agreed by GIRoA. This indicator is found done well as there has been Afghanistan Food and Nutrition Security Agenda (AFSANA) - a key policy and strategic framework for food and nutrition security is agreed, and endorsed by the office of the H.E Second Vice President. Indicator (b) is an inter-ministerial coordination structure for food and nutrition security interventions is institutionalized. Progress in this indicator is low as Food Security and Nutrition Steering Committee is not yet formed, though it is in the final stage of formation. The process is being delayed due to the fact that the new Cabinet is in place and they are critically reviewing each and every clause of the MoU. In order to support the implementation of the MoU, FAO through this project has been reached at final stage to sign an Implementation Agreement with UNICEF and WFP to operationalize the National Technical Secretariat. Indicator (c) is MAIL has an agreed strategy regarding its role in food and nutrition security. FSN strategy and planning and implementation manual which clearly spell out the roles of MAIL in food security and nutrition have been finalized, and already submitted to MAIL for official endorsement. The fourth indicator (d) is a monitoring system is designed and tested that enables tracking progress in FNS indicators. A set of FSN specific indicators for MAIL has been finalized in consultation with the relevant stakeholders. MAIL's FNS monitoring system is also reviewed and necessary integration has been done to ensure that the FSN is adequately incorporated there. The MAIL FSN monitoring system, however, is yet to be connected/ linked up with the M&E system of the National Technical Secretariat once it is fully operationalized.

The project has four outputs. Output 1 is stated as "The planning and implementation of the Food for Life National Priority Program will be led by guidelines for involved stakeholders." It has two indicators and indicator (a) is about a Planning and Implementation Manual for FNS interventions has been developed tested and is adopted by MAIL. The FNS planning and implementation manual has been prepared in English and Dari, and submitted to MAIL Minister for endorsement. It is yet to be tested and adopted by MAIL. The second indicator (b) is a long-term FSN Strategy has been developed and is guiding MAIL's long-term financial planning, i.e. the allocation of resources to FNS interventions. FSN strategy for MAIL has been prepared in English and Dari language. The strategy is submitted to MAIL for official endorsement. However, allocation of resources to FSN interventions is yet to take place. The reported 85% progress seems alright.

The output 2 is spelled out as "in cooperation with MAIL/PPD Statistics and MIS Departments and partners, the project will support the design and field testing of a monitoring system that will guide the management and supervision of FFL FSN interventions and which will provide evidence to identify best practices." It has two indicators, both of which are planned for year 3. The first indicator (a) is a set of no more than ten FNS specific indicators is defined, regularly assessed and published for internal and external use. The progress toward this set of FSN specific indicators (totalling 10) have been finalized in consultation with the relevant stakeholders. The indicators are also translated into Dari, which are expected to be published soon. The regular assessment of these indicators for internal and external use, however, is yet to take place. The second indicator (b) is MAIL's FNS monitoring is accepted as input into the national FNS M&E system, including for the requirements to report on Right to Food progress. Integration of FSN into MAIL MIS and M&E system has been completed. The FSN M&E report is expected to be produced by early 2016. Under the above context, the reported 85% progress in this output is close to reality.

Output 3 which is about the Support to the establishment of a FSN coordination unit in MAIL, including staff from relevant MAIL units at national level and the establishment of the necessary physical infrastructure (office /equipment) and provide on-the job training as required. Draft TOR for the Coordination Unit(s) at national level, has four indicators. This output was originally planned to have got the all results by the year 2. The indicator (a) which is about FSN unit is staffed, institutionalized and appears in the MAIL organogram, is not done due to the fact that the key decision maker/ official of MAIL was out of the country for more than 4 months, and it has delayed the formalization process of the FSN coordination unit and working group. The second indicator (b) which is an office is established and adequately furnished, is almost done as office space is identified and some furniture arranged for. The third indicator (c) related to implementation of capacity development plan for the FSN staff is also almost done with implementation of the FSN capacity development plan by providing internal and external training to FSN staff. The fourth indicator (d) At least 70% of the allocated FFL budget has been spent on planned projects and activities, however was not found progressed well, though this indicator is expected to be completed by the year 3. The 65% achievement reported to have resulted by this output looks realistic.

The output 4 is specified as clear procedures and processes for the implementation of the FNS strategic framework agreed by all stakeholders are finalized and operational. This output has only one indicator: Clear procedures and processes for the implementation of FNS strategic framework is in place. The procedure is drafted and is ready for signature. Major achievements under this output include that FSN framework popularly known as AFSANA is endorsed by GoIRA; FAO, UNICEF and WFP have jointly agreed to support GoIRA to establish High Level Coordination platform to operationalize FSANA; Relevant MoUs/ ToRs/ implementation procedures for the establishment of National Technical Secretariat has been finalized; AFSANA was presented to Cabinet meeting, waiting for the signal to sign the MoU/ Implementation Agreement; and Collaboration with various Directorates of MAIL, FAO and other stakeholders facilitated.

Though started implementation after one year from the originally planned date, the project has been progressing well. Many indicators are found to have been in the right direction to contribute to the overall outcome of the project. The capacity of MAIL and its partners has been improved to some extent to formulate and implement policies, programmes and projects that comprehensively address food and nutrition security problems.

Background and context

Despite the increasing number of urban populations in the country, Afghanistan is still dominated by its rural communities and livelihoods. About 76% of Afghans live in rural areas and 78% of the active population (2009 estimate) is employed in agriculture. About 55 % of the Afghan households are engaged in farming, and 6% have some type of livestock. Agriculture represents a key productive sector contributing to 31.4% of GDP (2009/2010) with the long-term potential to be a major driver of the economy.

Agriculture still plays a key role in the livelihood of the country, where farming and pastoral activities are often the only feasible alternative to unemployment. However, the majority of farmers are stuck in low productivity subsistence agriculture with many farming or pastoralist households barely able to feed their families.

Afghanistan is a food insecure country. Food insecurity is not limited to physical availability of food and its domestic production but refers to the fundamental right of the Afghan people to have “physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe, nutritious and culturally accepted food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (World Food Summit 1996). This right is limited by the prevailing conditions of poverty, lack of economic opportunities, inadequate support to communities and insufficient “safety nets”.

Out of the approximately 27 million inhabitants, around 10 million Afghans (36%) live below the national poverty line, unable to meet their basic needs and dietary requirement. Food insecurity is found also in urban areas, accompanied by malnutrition. The food price crisis hit the country more than other countries given its level of poverty. A second group of Afghans, corresponding to 37% of the population, are slightly better off, but still living on the borderline of absolute poverty and food insecurity. Their conditions are influenced by fluctuations of economic factors (e.g. food prices, income and employment opportunities).

Women, in particular rather than female-headed households, are found to have a disproportionate inferior access to adequate food, even if the household to which they belong is not considered vulnerable: 21% of the women in reproductive age group are malnourished and 60.5% of children under the age of five are stunted (one of the highest levels in the world), and 33.7 percent of them are underweight.

FAO's Country Programming Framework (CPF) began to be formulated in 2011 and was signed in September 2012. Up to 2012 FAO's programme development is linked to the the Agriculture Master Plan, the NADF and the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Strategy.

The portfolio for evaluation

FAO, in collaboration, with the government and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) in particular, implemented a large number of projects responding to efficient and demand driven extension service, effective and efficient institutional structures and processes and women empowerment.

This evaluation will assess three interlinked projects:

- Strengthening the Role of Women in Agriculture Development for Improved Household Food "GCP/AFG/069/GER"

Duration: Three years
Starting Date: 1 Jan 2012
Completion Date: 30 Sep 2015
FAO LTU: AGND (Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division)
Total Funding: USD 2 158 164

The project aims at:

- Increase understanding of the different roles of women and men in agricultural activities, decision-making and their share in the benefits;
- Identify potential barriers to participation in market-led development initiatives and technology adoption;
- Understand gender differences in accessing information sources and services (extension, financial) and in participating in social networks, group membership and leadership;
- Identify opportunities to enable women and men to have equality of opportunity to participate in production cycles, diversification and market-led development activities.

The **overall objective** of the proposed project is to enhance the role of women in food production and household livelihoods and, hence, improved household nutrition and food security in economically and socially disadvantaged rural, urban and peri-urban areas.

The immediate objective of the project is to enhance the efficacy of HED at national level and in selected provinces to better deliver the required services in support of improved food, nutrition and livelihoods security. The project is structured around two outcomes:

Outcome 1: strengthening the management and technical capacities of MAIL, in particular the General Directorate of Agricultural Extension in general and the Home Economics Department in particular, to improve effectiveness and scale-up of their services in rural, urban and peri-urban areas

Outcome 2: Supports the establishment of women's agriculture training and development centres. Those centres have the aim of supporting the introduction and transfer of innovative and appropriate technologies, and acting as resource centres with particular focus on women's roles and domains in rural, peri-urban and urban area-based agriculture, production, food security and nutrition

Output 1: The MAIL's (Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock) strategic objective and approach to provide agriculture services to women for improving household food security and nutrition, within its wider policy framework, is developed, documented, endorsed and disseminated.

Output 2: Pilot provincial women resource, training and technology transfer centres are established in priority provinces (identified by MAIL, where core resources are secured).

Output 3: HED and partner's technical and managerial capacity to plan and implement projects in rural and urban areas is strengthened.

Output 4: MAIL is supported in building up sustainable project management with regard to women, agriculture and household food security, including planning, implementation, supervision and monitoring structures at national and provincial level, allowing effective implementation and regular project adjustments.

Output 5: MAIL in particular HED is knowledgeable in all aspects regarding fundraising and resource mobilization activities.

- Strengthening Policy Development and Coordination for Food and Nutrition Security in Afghanistan "GCP/AFG/075/GER"

Duration: Three years
Starting Date: 1 January 2013
Completion Date: 30 Sep 2016
FAO LTU: AGNP
Total Funding: USD 2 398 979

The project aims at:

- Advice on effective and efficient institutional structures and processes to develop and implement a National Framework for Food and Nutrition Security within the government and its administrative structures.
- Advisory services to the Director General Policy and Planning on developing policies, programmes, procedures and legal documents in support of a rights-based approach for the implementation of the Food for Life NPP (National Priority Programme).
- Capacity building for planning and implementation of food security and nutrition interventions in the framework of the Food for Life NPP.
- Advisory services to the plan, policy and programme coordination Directorate on institutional and technical issues related to food security and nutrition.

Immediate objective: The capacity of MAIL and its partners to formulate and implement policies, programmes and projects that comprehensively address food and nutrition security problems is improved and consolidated.

Output 1: The planning and implementation of the Food for Life National Priority Programme are being led by guidelines for involved stakeholders.

Output 2: In cooperation with MAIL/PPD (Directorate of Policy and Planning) Statistics and MIS Departments and partners, a monitoring system to guide the management and supervision of Food Security and Nutrition interventions providing evidence to identify best practices is developed.

Output 3: Food Security and Nutrition planning and coordination unit in MAIL, including staff from relevant MAIL units at national level and the necessary physical infrastructure (office/equipment) to provide on-the job training as required is established and working.

Output 4: FNS Strategic Framework is finalized, including clear procedures and processes for its implementation agreed by all stakeholders

- Support to Extension Systems, Household Food and Livelihood Security “GCP/AFG/072/LUX”

Duration: Three years
Starting Date: 1 Aug 2013
Completion Date: 31 Jul 2016
FAO LTU: DDNR
Total Funding: USD 2,370,350

The project aims at:

- An efficient and demand driven extension service in two districts with a view to replicate the experience to the rest of the country;
- Enhanced collaboration and coordination among relevant government, NGO and community-based organizations (CBO);
- Improved food and livelihood security of the most vulnerable and food insecure households in the two districts.

Outcome 1: Central and decentralized government institutions successfully facilitate and coordinate needed support to vulnerable and food insecure households.

- **Output 1.1:** Baseline survey of demographic indicators consolidated in a database.
- **Output 1.2:** Baseline survey of social indicators conducted.
- **Output 1.3:** Institutional and human capacity of MAIL and MRRD offices enhanced in accordance with needs identified through baseline survey

Outcome 2: Collaboration and coordination strengthened among government and non-government institutions, community-based organizations (CBOs) and other stakeholders to support livelihoods and food security

- **Output 2.1:** Common Interest Groups (CIGs) established and functioning.
- **Output 2.2:** Technical capacity of CIGs and MAIL in agricultural production, post-harvest handling, processing (including linkages to nutrition and food safety) and marketing developed and strengthened
- **Output 2.3:** Farmer field schools established
- **Output 2.4:** Linkages between producers and private service providers established

Outcome 3: A model extension approach implemented to enhance national service and input provision framework

- **Output 3.1:** Experiences and lessons learnt documented and disseminated

The portfolio structure

All the 3 projects have individual implementation arrangement; hence they are not the part of a programme. However, there are some linkages and collaboration between these projects. All the projects are managed by FAO Afghanistan. Each project has its own structure such as:

The portfolio governance

Each project is in the progress to establish/ formalise the steering committee. However, each project has line Department and national counterpart with whom the project is working closely on day to day business. For all the projects, FAO Representative in Afghanistan is the Budget Holder. The individual project responsible for the M&E; the project in association with operations unit,

LTO and TCSR is responsible for reporting; Country Office operations unit provides operational support to the respective project, while LTO, FAORAP provides backstopping support to the individual project. For GCP/AFG/069/GER and GCP/AFG/075/GER there is one LTO Regional Nutrition Officer, RAP, while, Food Security and Nutrition Programme and Policy Officer, Nutrition Division (FAO HQ) is the LTU. For GCP/AFG/072/LUX the LTO is Senior Agro-Industries and Post-harvest Officer at FAO- RAPGD while the LTU is DNRD in Rome.

Evaluation purpose

The main purpose of this evaluation is to assess the overall contribution of the portfolio to enhanced coordinated and informed food security policies, support extension service and women empowerment in agriculture development at national and sub-national levels. The evaluation will provide recommendations for maximizing the strategic relevance of FAO's work in Afghanistan on food security, policy support, institutional strengthening and gender mainstreaming, and capacity development.

The main audiences of the evaluation to which the findings and recommendations will be offered are the FAO Afghanistan, the relevant LTU, donors and the Steering Committee.

Evaluation scope

The evaluation will assess the three projects as one unit, focusing on outcome level results and the most strategic outputs. The evaluation will cover the total period of implementation of all the projects. Two projects (GCP/AFG/072/LUX and GCP/AFG/075/GER) will be assessed as a mid-term evaluation will analyse the work and assess the overall contribution by the programme in selected focus countries, the evaluation will emphasize on intended and unintended results, less emphasis will be given to management and process aspects.

The evaluation exercise will be carried out between September and December 2015 with field mission to Afghanistan.

Objective of the evaluation and evaluation questions

The portfolio comprises three intertwined projects and linked under the FAO Afghanistan CPF Priority Area No 5: **Support to food and nutrition security**.

Two projects (069/GER and 072/LUX – 50% 075/GER) contribute to:

Organizational Output: 10201 - Improving capacities of governments and stakeholders for strategic coordination across sectors and stakeholders for food security and nutrition.

The project (50% - 075/GER) contributes to:

Organizational Output: 10101 - Improving capacities of governments and stakeholders for developing sectoral and cross-sectoral policy frameworks and investment plans and programmes for food security and nutrition.

The evaluation will assess:

- i The overall effectiveness of the capacity development work on country capacities, governance and policies within Food Security and Nutrition;
- ii The overall effectiveness of gender responsiveness and empowerment, the quality of the advisory services and coordination mechanisms;
- iii The overall contribution of the portfolio to the CPF and the FAO Organizational Outputs;
- iv The overall efficiency and effectiveness of partnership strategies including working with non-state actors.

The key evaluation questions include:

- How the portfolio contributed to enhanced agriculture services to women for improving household food security and nutrition and increase women's access to markets, extension service, information and resources?
- To what extent the portfolio contributed to enhanced capacities, institutional structures and processes (enabling environment, institutional and individual levels) for improved policy development, programme design and implementation and procedures?
- To what extent the portfolio contributed to enhanced partnerships, collaboration and coordination mechanisms between central government institutions and decentralized offices and community-based organizations (CBO) for better livelihood?
- What are the portfolio contributions to the two Organizational Outputs?

Methodology

The overall approach for conducting the evaluation will be the Theory-based approach, a detailed Theory of Change and Theory of Action will be developed in close consultations with the evaluation users, the evaluation will collect primary data from the key stakeholders as well as field-level beneficiaries and analysing secondary data for the project team.

The Theory of Change will go beyond the portfolio results framework/log-frame by establishing a common results framework that encompass the three log-frames looking at the drivers of change and the development barriers, looking at the factors of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact. The Theory of Action will describe the process aspects of implementation arrangements, partnership strategies within the country partners, national and sub-national institutions and NGOs/CBOs. The Theory of Action will consider feedback loops, efficiency measures and lines of communication and outreach.

In line with the evaluation objectives, the evaluation will undertake in-depth country level case studies with in depth analysis of relevant national policies and programme, the evaluation team will use the Collaborative Outcome Reporting Technique to identify consistency with the theory of change, in addition the Multiple Lines and Levels of Evidence tool will be used to review the evidence for a causal relationship between the outputs delivered by the programme and outcome level changes in terms of its strength, consistency, specificity and coherence.

Roles and responsibilities

The **Office of Evaluation (OED)** will draft the ToR, identify the consultants and organize the team's work in close consultations with the programme management and the EC. OED is responsible for the finalization of the ToR and of the team composition; it shall brief the evaluation team on the evaluation methodology and process and will review the final draft report for Quality Assurance purposes in terms of presentation, compliance with the ToR and timely delivery, quality, clarity and soundness of evidence provided and of the analysis supporting conclusions and recommendations. OED also has a responsibility in following up with the BH for the timely preparation of the Management Response.

The **Programme Management**, which includes the FAO Budget Holder (BH), the Lead Technical Officers (LTO), is responsible for supporting the evaluation team mission planning and in-country mission agendas. They are required to participate in meetings with the team, make available information and documentation as necessary, and comment on the draft final ToRs and report. Involvement of different members of the programme management will depend on respective roles and participation in the project. The BH is also responsible for leading and coordinating the preparation of the FAO Management Response and the Follow-up Report to the evaluation, fully supported in this task by the LTO. OED guidelines for the Management Response and the Follow-up Report provide necessary details on this process.

The **Evaluation Team (ET)** is responsible for conducting the evaluation, applying the methodology as appropriate and for producing the evaluation report. All team members, including the Team Leader, will participate in briefing and debriefing meetings, discussions, field

visits, and will contribute to the evaluation with written inputs for the final draft and final report. The evaluation team and the OED Evaluation Manager will agree on the outline of the report early in the evaluation process, based on the template provided by OED. The ET will also be free to expand the scope, questions and issues listed above, as well as develop its own evaluation tools and framework, within time and resources available. The team is fully responsible for its report which may not reflect the views of the Government or of FAO. An evaluation report is subject to clearance by OED. The team members will also be responsible of completing an anonymous and confidential questionnaire requested by OED at the end of the evaluation to get their feedback on the evaluation process. The ET will submit records of meetings held with stakeholders to the Evaluation Manager.

The **Team Leader** guides and coordinates the team members in their specific work, discusses their findings, conclusions and recommendations and prepares the final draft and the final report, consolidating the inputs from the team members with his/her own. As a contribution to the OED Knowledge Management System, the Team Leader will be responsible for completing the OED quantitative project performance questionnaire, to be delivered at the same time with the final evaluation report.

Evaluation team composition and Profile

The evaluation team will comprise of an international team leader and two senior national experts. The experts are required to assess the project sites and provide strategic advice, and as a whole, the team will have expertise in the following areas:

- Good understanding of the food and nutrition security governance and policy processes at national levels;
- Substantive knowledge and experience on the role of women in agricultural development and extension services and food and nutrition analysis and policy tools and capacity development in improving governance at national/sub-national levels;
- Experience in mainstreaming of gender equality, nutrition, governance and capacity development across large organizational initiatives;
- Experience in resilience building;
- Skills in conducting evaluations and in leading strategic evaluations;
- Substantive knowledge and experience in FAO corporate-level strategic planning and project management would be an advantage;
- Drafting and communication skills in English.

Evaluation products (deliverables)

The key evaluation products the evaluation team will be accountable for producing are:

- Evaluation inception report—the inception report should be prepared by the evaluation team before going into the fully-fledged data collection exercise. It should detail the evaluators' understanding of what is being evaluated and why, showing how each evaluation question will be answered by way of: proposed methods, proposed sources of data and data collection procedures. The inception report should include activities and deliverables, designating the lead responsibility among the team.
- Draft evaluation report—the project team and key stakeholders in the evaluation should review the draft evaluation report to ensure relevance and quality of analysis.
- Final evaluation report: should include an executive summary and illustrate the evidence found that responds to the evaluation issues and/or questions listed in the ToR. The report will be prepared in English, following OED template.
- Evaluation brief and consultation records.

Appendix 2: Brief profile of evaluation team members

Team leader: Gana Pati Ojha

Gana Pati Ojha has about three decades of professional experience in development cooperation. He has spent almost one-third of the professional life in research and evaluation. He has conducted over 40 evaluations and two-third of them in the capacity of team leader or sole evaluator. He has experience in a wide variety of sectors such as agriculture, food security, civil society, peace and development, economic empowerment and education with gender and social inclusion being a focal issue on many assignments.

Dr Ojha is also actively involved in promoting quality evaluation in countries of South Asia through Community of evaluators South Asia and Community of Evaluators Nepal in terms of supporting for developing evaluation policies, guidelines, conducting conclaves, conferences and organising the Global Evaluation Week which was organised in Kathmandu from 23-27 November 2015 to culminate the International Evaluation Events around the world. Dr. Ojha was one of the five recipients of the EvalPartners Awards that was provided in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the advancement of evaluation.

Team Member: Dr Khal Mohammad Ahmadzai

Dr Khal Mohammad Ahmadzai is an associate professor at the Agricultural economics and extension department of Agriculture faculty in Kabul University. He received his MS and PhD from the Tokyo University of Agriculture and technology in the field of Food Security and Rural Poverty in Afghanistan and also he works on Agribusiness and agricultural policy. In addition to teaching in the department, Dr Ahmadzai is regular contributors with national and international NGOs and organizations and recently he started his closed contribution with FAO Afghanistan in the evaluation of three projects as well.

Appendix 3: Documents reviewed

- 1 Strengthening the Role of Women in Agriculture Development for Improved Household Food Security and Nutrition -- Project Number: GCP /AFG/069/GER
- 2 Support to Extension Systems, Household Food and Livelihood Security (HFLS) – Phase II-- Project Number: GCP /AFG/072/LUX
- 3 Strengthening Policy Development and Coordination for Food and Nutrition Security in Afghanistan- Implementation Support for the "Food for Life" National Priority -- Project Number: GCP /AFG/075/GER
- 4 Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSANA), 2012: A Policy and Strategic Framework
- 5 Project Progress Reports (GCP/AFG/075/GER) January – June 2015, July-December 2014, January-June 2014, July-December, 2013
- 6 Project Progress Reports (GCP/AFG/072/LUX) July-December 2014, January-June 2014, July-December, 2013
- 7 Project Progress Reports (GCP/AFG/075/GER) January – June 2015, July-December 2014, January-June 2014, July-December, 2013
- 8 Country Programming Framework (CPF) 2012-2015 for Afghanistan. FAO and GICoA, 2012.
- 9 Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. 2012. Agriculture and Rural Development Cluster. National Priority Program Two. National Comprehensive Agriculture Production and Market Development.
- 10 MAIL. Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) Monitoring & Evaluation Framework.
- 11 MOPH. Nutrition indicators under surveillance system and routine program reporting
- 12 FAO. 2015. FSN Newsletters March 2015, July 2015
- 13 MAIL. 2015. Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) Strategy: 2015 – 2019
- 14 MAIL. 2015. MANUAL for Planning and Implementation of Food Security and Nutrition Projects and Programmes.
- 15 FAO/WHO. 2014. International Conference on Nutrition – 20 Years Later (ICN+20): National Nutrition and Food Security Country Paper Afghanistan.
- 16 GCP/AFG/072/LUX. Wheat Seed and Fertilizer Distribution in Dehdadi District of Balkh province (Dec -2014).
- 17 GCP/AFG/072/LUX. Urea and DAP Fertilizer Distribution in Center of Bamyan (September -2014).
- 18 GCP/AFG/072/LUX. Comparison of Field Income of Local and Improved seed of Coriander, spinach, radish and cauliflower.
- 19 GCP/AFG/072/LUX. Checklist for Identification of Livelihood and Common Interest Groups.
- 20 GCP/AFG/069/GER. Data Table for Donor Mapping
- 21 GCP/AFG/069/GER. Monitoring report from ten percent beneficiaries of strengthening the role of women in agriculture for improved household food security and nutrition (GCP/ AFG/069/GER) project
- 22 MAIL. National Strategy on Women in Agriculture (2015-2020).
- 23 MAIL, Mapping of MAIL programmes/projects (donor supported) of Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) from a gender perspective.
- 24 GCP/AFG/069/GER. Best Practices and Lessons learnt.
- 25 GCP/AFG/069/GER. TNA Summary Analysis
- 26 GCP/AFG/069/GER. Training Database.

Appendix 4: Evaluation tools

Questions, sub-questions and respondents

Question	Sub-question	Respondent
To what extent is the FOA support to food and nutrition relevant to	The needs of the target group?	Target Beneficiaries
	The national priority area?	MAIL
	The CPF of the FAO?	FAO
	Stated goals and outcomes?	FAO, MAIL
To what extent was the implementation approach of FOA adequate to generate stated results? How could the FOA approach be more effective to achieve intended results?		FAO, MAIL, Beneficiaries
How were beneficiaries identified? Who were missing? How could the identification process be more appropriate?		FAO, MAIL, Beneficiaries
How appropriate were the institutional set up? How appropriate were the management arrangement? How could the institutional set up and management arrangement be more appropriate?		FAO staff, MAIL, Key Informants/experts
How has the operational management function of the FAO performed in terms of:	Strategic decision making?	MAIL, FAO
	Timeliness of delivery? Causes and consequences of delay and measures taken	
	Monitoring system?	
	Internal review process? How could the above 4 areas of operational management be improved?	
How appropriate was the administrative support provided by FAO HQ, regional and country office? How could have the administrative support been more appropriate?		MAIL, FAO, MRRD
How appropriate was the technical support provided by FAO HQ, regional and country office? How could have the technical support been more appropriate?		MAIL, FAO, MRRD
What were the noticeable synergetic effects developed while working in partnership to programme delivery? How could have more synergy been developed?		MAIL, MRRD, other ministries WFP, UNICEF, FAO
How effective was the role of steering committee? How could have the role of steering committee been more effective?		MAIL, MRRD, other ministries WFP, UNICEF, FAO
How strong was the government commitment? How could have the commitment been more effective?		MAIL, MRRD, other ministries WFP, UNICEF, FAO
How did the portfolio contribute to	enhanced agriculture services to women for improving household food security and n	MAIL, MRRD, MOWA, other ministries WFP, UNICEF, FAO, Target beneficiary women, Provincial and district authorities of above ministries
	Nutrition	
How did the portfolio contribute to increase women's access to	Markets and information and resources?	MAIL, MRRD, MOWA, other ministries WFP, UNICEF, FAO, Target beneficiary women, Provincial and district authorities of above ministries
	Extension service	

To what extent the portfolio contributed to enhanced capacities, institutional structures and processes (enabling environment, institutional and individual levels) for improved policy development, programme design and implementation and procedures?		MAIL, MRRD, MOWA, other ministries WFP, UNICEF, FAO
To what extent the portfolio contributed to enhanced partnerships, collaboration and coordination mechanisms between central government institutions and decentralized offices and community-based organizations (CBO) for better livelihood?		MAIL, DAIL, MRRD, MOWA, other ministries WFP, UNICEF, FAO, Target beneficiary women, Provincial and district authorities of above ministries
What are the portfolio contributions to the two Organizational Outputs?		FAO, MAIL, MOWA, MRRD, WFP, UNICEF
To what extent have gender issues reflected into the implementation of FAO initiatives? How could have they been better reflected?		MAIL, DAIL, MRRD, MOWA, other ministries WFP, UNICEF, FAO, Target beneficiary women, Provincial and district authorities of above ministries
How have FAO initiatives affected gender relations and inclusion of women into the related development process?		MAIL, DAIL, MRRD, MOWA, other ministries WFP, UNICEF, FAO, Target beneficiary women, Provincial and district authorities of above ministries
To what extent has the capacity of service providers developed in providing technical services to marginal, vulnerable groups including women?		MAIL, DAIL, FAO, target beneficiaries
To what extent has the capacity of MAIL and its partners developed to formulate policies, programmes and projects that comprehensively address food and nutrition security problems?		MAIL, DAIL, FAO, partner organisations
To what extent has the capacity of MAIL and its partners developed to implement policies, programmes and projects that comprehensively address food and nutrition security problems?		MAIL, DAIL, FAO, partner organisations
To what extent has capacity of HED at national level enhanced to better deliver the required services in support of improved food, nutrition and livelihoods security?		MAIL, DAIL, FAO, partner organisations, HED
To what extent has capacity of HED in selected provinces enhanced to better deliver the required services in support of improved food, nutrition and livelihoods security?		MAIL, DAIL, FAO, partner organisations, HED, provincial authorities
To what extent has collaboration and coordination strengthened among government and non-government institutions, community-based organizations (CBOs) and other stakeholders to support livelihoods and food security?		MAIL, DAIL, FAO, partner organisations, HED, provincial authorities, CBOs
To what extent have central and decentralized government institutions facilitated and coordinated needed support to vulnerable and food insecure households?		MAIL, DAIL, FAO, partner organisations, provincial authorities, CBOs, target beneficiaries

What are the significant 3 changes that the FAO initiatives have brought in the areas of household food security?	a.	Community stakeholders, MAIL, DAIL, FAO, partner organisations, provincial authorities, CBOs,
	b.	
	c.	
What are the significant 3 changes that the FAO initiatives have brought in the area of policy support?	a.	MAIL, DAIL, MRRD, FAO
	b.	
	c.	
What are the significant 3 changes that the FAO initiatives have brought in the area of institutional strengthening and gender mainstreaming?	a.	MAIL, DAIL, MRRD, FAO
	b.	
	c.	
What are the significant 3 changes that the FAO initiatives have brought in the area of capacity development?	a.	MAIL, DAIL, MRRD, FAO, provincial authorities, Community stakeholders
	b.	
	c.	

Checklist for observation

- WTTTC and its facilities
- Demo plots of WTTTC
- Mushroom farms
- Laboratory for extraction of mycelium
- Kitchen garden, micro-garden, roof garden
- Commercial farms

Checklist for focus group discussion

- History of group
- Training
- Activities of group members
- Economic activities
- Social activities
- Leadership development
- Income
- Changes
- Most significant change
- Factor of changes
- Use of income
- Suggestion for improvement

Appendix 5: Comprehensive analysis of three projects of FAO (069/GER, 072/LUX and 075/GER)

Projects	Expected outputs for the projects	Achievements	Evaluation	Percentage achieved against target for the reporting period
069/GER	The MAIL's strategic objective and approach to provide agriculture services to women for improving household food security and nutrition, within its wider policy framework, is developed, documented, endorsed and disseminated	Developed national strategy for women in agriculture. Developed capacity building frame work. Provided and facilitated training in three regions Developed national plan of action for women in agriculture. Facilitate and organized a national workshop on women in agriculture.	As discussed with the relevant counterparts during evaluation, they supported to develop national strategy, capacity development frame work, action plan and organized national workshop on women in agriculture.	Targeted 100% and achieved 95%
	Pilot provincial women resource, training and technology transfer centers are established in priority provinces (identified by MAIL, where core resources are secured).	Established training centers (WTTTC) in all three regions: Central (Kabul – Badambagh) visited Northern(Badakhshan-Faizabad) Western(Herat – Urdoghan)	The coordination between WTTTC and DAIL in Badambagh was weak as per discussion with DAIL staff.	Targeted 100% and achieved 100%
	MAIL/HEDs technical capacity with regard to household food security and nutrition is strengthened.	Facilities and organized mushroom cultivation training for 150 (men and women)(MAIL/HED and women) in Kabul, Istalif, Badakhshan, Hirat and Parwan, 30 NHLP women extension worker Mycelium production for 40 people in Kabul in Badambagh 30 in Herat and 30 in Badakhshan 2 FFS organized on mushroom cultivation in district 10 for 20 women	But the sustainability of the mushroom production was not ensured due to not producing spawn and mycelium inside the country, as is done in Mazar by 072 project. The mushroom in district 10 was not running properly.	Achieved 100%
	MAIL is supported in building up sustainable project management with regard to women, agriculture and household food security, including planning, implementation, supervision and monitoring structures at national and provincial level, allowing effective implementation and regular project	Management system structured. Developed work plan for the project activities with HED. The implementation of the activities planned with HED in the center and other two regions. Reporting system developed with HED. Developed training curriculum for each year. Day-to-day management support to HED. Organized field visit monitoring plan and developed monitoring guideline. 636 Beneficiaries Monitoring.	As visited WTTTC in Badambagh of Kabul, there was some brushers, training guides, processing methods materials, booklet and guiding posters for the trainings. The training center had some facilities (copier, printer, desks, chairs, kitchen tools and demo plot at the same place.	Targeted 100% and achieved 100%

	MAIL in particular HED is knowledgeable in all aspects regarding fundraising and resource mobilization activities.	The project with HED made progress on the resource mobilization issues Coordination meetings were organized with (some other organizations and NGOs) for the joint activities with HED the project and attracting their financial assistance National workshop was co-financed by UNDP(8000\$) and 1500\$ FSAC 3000\$ contributed from IFAD/RMLSP to M&E workshop that was organized for 42 MAIL /HED, Cooperatives members from 16 provinces and FAO different FNS projects staff 1395 fruit- trees(apple, Peach) 10 kind of vegetable seeds provided by NHLP and other MAIL partners to women groups in Kabul, Badakhshan Herat and Badghis	The coordination among MAIL departments was very weak, even M&E directorate mentioned that they do not know very well about the coordination which provided by the three projects. Also NGOs (Afghan Aid and ACF) didn't have any connection with the project (069 and 072 projects).	Targeted 100% and achieved 100%
072/LUX	Baseline survey of demographic indicators consolidated in a database	Coordinate the survey with district Governor, District Council (Shura) and Community Development Committee (CDC) MAIL district team was identified and conducted the checklist livelihood survey by the team.	Baseline survey conducted by DAIL staffs in the field and based on the survey the DAIL developed district level database model.	Targeted 100% and achieved up to date 100%
	Baseline survey of social indicators conducted	Sex disaggregated baseline information on household nutrition, Income, post-harvest losses, processing, food insecurity and production system consolidated.	Door by door survey was conducted and based on that social indicators were generated	Targeted 100% and achieved up to date 5% and 80% progress to date
	Institutional and human capacity of MAIL and MRRD officers enhanced in accordance with needs identified through baseline survey.	Provided training to MAIL/MRRD staff. Providing equipment in the target districts- (computers, motorcycles, mobile phone and furniture) Provided training to MAIL/MRRD officers in Targeted and neighboring districts Enabling of MAIL/MRRD staff to make use of provided equipment and materials	Provided inception workshops technical support to CIGs and MAIL and established project management team, provided facilities to the project counterpart (district DAIL).	Targeted 100% and achieved up to date 10% and 60% progress to date

	Common Interest Groups (CIGs) established and functioning	Formation of 200 CIGs Conducted training for CIGs Assist the groups management to open bank account Cost recovery based inputs, provided on the groups' demands. Support CIGs to take decision on group registration either as CIG, single purpose cooperative or association. Identify critical inputs and proper technologies that the groups are unable to access for lack of resources.	Common interest groups (CIGs) were established (72 in Dehdadi of Balkh, but out of 72 CIGs, due to poor economic condition 12 couldn't get the package of inputs provided by the project at recovery cost). 104 CIGs established in Bamyar. Provided inputs to small scale farmers as per their demand on cost recovery basis.	Targeted 200 CIGs and established 181 up to reporting date
	Technical/ administrative capacity building of CIGs and MAIL staffs in agricultural production, post-harvest handling, processing (including linkages to nutrition and food safety) and marketing developed and strengthened	Provided training to the CIGs and MAIL staffs Provided technical support to the farmer to reduce post-harvest losses and increase net income from their production Technical support (nutrition education) to the household to diversify their food patterns.	Provided technical capacity building training for CIGs and MAIL in production, post-harvest, spawn, mushroom cultivation and processing.	Targeted 100% and achieved up to date 20% and 30% progress up to date
	Farmer field schools established	Developing of farmer field school within (3 in 2015 and 3 in 2016). 2 ToT training will organize (one in 2015 and one in 2016)	Farmer field school was under development.	Targeted 40 FFS and established 33 40%
	Linkages between producers and private service providers established	Technical support to the number of farmer to expose market opportunity through agri faire and links with local and private inputs providers.	Still the output was not achieved.	Targeted 200 partnership with producer and private service provider, but still not achieved.
	Experiences and lessons learnt documented and disseminated	Developed factsheets. Formulated policy recommendation Developed some documents summarizing lessons learned Developed guidelines Developed some extension messages	As the project was in the ongoing stage, the experiences and lessons learnt still under process.	Targeted 8 lesson learn document, up to date 2 achieved and 4 in progress
075/GER	The planning and implementation of the Food for Life National Priority Program will be led by guidelines for involved stakeholders.	FSN policy taskforce established. FSN strategy for MAIL is formulated. FSN planning and implementation manual for MAIL is developed. Policy assistance and technical advises provided to MAIL and MoPH.	Formulated FSN strategy and established FSN stockholders.	Targeted 100% and achieved up to date 85%

	<p>In cooperation with MAIL and partners, the project will support the design and field testing of a monitoring system that will guide the management and supervision of FSN interventions and which will provide evidence to identify best practices.</p>	<p>FSN M&E taskforce at MAIL not clear. A set of FSN indicators on FSN for MAIL is developed but clearly identified by all MAIL. FSN gaps in the MAIL are reviewed and identified. Provided technical capacity development training to MAIL M&E and MIS focal points on FSN. Technical assistance on data base development and data analysis related to agriculture and food security assessment provided to MAIL and MIS.</p>	<p>The indicators which were developed by 075, were not recognized by all departments of MAIL and the implementation was still unclear.</p>	<p>Targeted 100% and achieved up to date 85%</p>
	<p>Support to the establishment of a FSN coordination unit in MAIL, including staff and the establishment of the necessary physical infrastructure (office/equipment) and provide on-the job training as required is established and working.</p>	<p>FSN unit will be establishing at MAIL. 7 specialized training courses conducted. Provided trainings to 186 MAIL staff (at center and province). Provided trainings study tours in overseas to 12 MAIL senior staffs. FSN relevant communication/ learning materials (newsletters, factsheets, posters and website) are developed and disseminated.</p>	<p>Developed FSN web page and provided some training on food security and nutrition indicators to the MAIL staff and other stockholders. Generated food security and nutrition indicators to MAIL.</p>	<p>Targeted 100% and achieved up to date 65%</p>
	<p>Clear procedures and processes for the implementation of the FSN strategic framework agreed by all stakeholders are finalized and operational.</p>	<p>FSN framework popularly known as AFSANA endorsed by GoIRA. FAO, UNICEF and WFP jointly agreed to support GoIRA to establish High Level Coordination platform to operationalize FSANA. Relevant MoUs/ ToRs/ implementation procedures for the establishment of national technical secretariat finalized. Recently AFSANA was presented to Cabinet meeting, waiting for the signal to sign the MoU/ Implementation Agreement. Collaboration with various Directorates of MAIL, FAO and other stakeholders facilitated.</p>	<p>FSN is generated by AFSANA to be implement by MAIL and MAIL has established a unit for FSN. Some stockholders were still worry about the implementation and sustainability of the FSN strategy. It needs to be supported politically to implement successfully.</p>	<p>Targeted 100% and achieved up to date 70%</p>

Office of Communications – November 2020

Cluster evaluation of: Strengthening the Role of Women in Agriculture Development for Improved Household Food Strengthening Policy Development and Coordination for Food and Nutrition Security in Afghanistan Support to Extension Systems, Household Food and Livelihood Security

Corrigendum

Updated on 17/09/2021

The following corrections were made to the PDF after it went to print.

Page	Location	Text in printed PDF	Text in corrected PDF
44-46	Appendix 4	Entire appendix	Entire appendix removed.
47-49	Appendix 5	Entire appendix	Entire appendix renamed to Appendix 4 and moved to pages 45-47.
50-53	Appendix 6	Entire appendix	Entire appendix renamed to Appendix 5 and moved to pages 48-51.



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**

OFFICE OF EVALUATION
www.fao.org/evaluation